

I fail to understand those who are supporting the principle of universality, according to which no change should be made to the present system. It is evident that the purpose is to narrow the gap between rich and poor and I, as representative of a population which also includes a percentage of poverty, feel it is my duty to defend not the government's position, but those people who are in the greatest need, which, after all, is mere common sense.

Of course I have on occasion not seen eye to eye with the government or certain colleagues. I believe what matters is to support sensible policies regarding the common welfare. I feel in duty bound to support the legislation right away and I invite other hon. members to expedite the matter so that those who have been waiting so long for these changes may benefit by them as early as possible.

I read the speech of the hon. member for Compton (Mr. Latulippe). He was in the House for quite awhile this afternoon. I regret that he is gone. I was very surprised to read, for instance, such stupid statements as he made yesterday when he mentioned that the government was more interested in subsidizing piglets which definitely belong to producers than in concerning itself with children. And he stated that the government had initiated a policy guaranteeing \$5 per piglet, which is completely false. No grant is paid unreservedly to piglet producers. Everybody knows that the government has provided a \$5 grant for hogs and that such a grant is limited to 200 hogs per producer.

I also note that he stated at a certain moment and I quote:

—50 per cent of the population is unemployed—

And he added later on:

Nearly 35 per cent of our population is now unemployed—

Such statements are nothing short of stupid and I wonder how a member of the Social Credit who often advocates redistribution of wealth from the rich to the poor can put forward such arguments and reject such a legislation which, in my opinion, is precisely aimed at providing increased benefits to the needy.

Mr. Speaker, now that election rumours are flying, each member is tempted to add a dash of electioneering spice to his comments and thus I ask myself how can we serve the community when we raise partisan issues.

As for that redistribution which the Creditists are so eager to carry out, such is the object of the bill now under consideration. As for the amendment, it is aimed at further delaying passage of the bill. On the contrary, I think that it is urgent to pass it, considering that the legislation has remained unchanged for almost 30 years.

However, I cannot say that this bill is absolutely perfect, but even if it has some defects it is better to pass it as soon as possible than to do nothing at all.

Some members say that those who are opposed to this measure will vote against the poor. It is too easy to argue that way if one considers the complexity of this bill, the difficulties that might be ahead for those who will be allowed to take advantage of it and it does not seem to me that those arguments may justify the rejection of this bill.

It is very easy to criticize and to make people think that this measure will be a mystery to them. I do not think that

these arguments will convince people to refuse these very useful increases. It is clear that the families who need it most will definitely be protected under this legislation.

As members of parliament with a responsibility to society, we cannot but support this legislation. This does not mean that members of the House must remain quiet and accept it without saying a word. It is very desirable that each member express his concerns about this bill, but I cannot understand why anyone can object to legislation to assist a group of people in need. No member in this House can disprove this.

But to return to the election climate, we may be tempted by electioneering—as a matter of fact we have seen nothing else in this House for nearly a month—but I wonder to what extent, by so doing, we are serving the best interests of our society. Have we forgotten our duty?

The previous speaker, a representative of the New Democratic Party, mentioned the duty of the government and indeed of each and every one of the hon. members. When people talk about the Canadian government, they refer to those wise men who are responsible for the administration of this country's business. I assume that those who can hear the arguments of hon. members will realize their lack of interest in the collective good.

I know that according to our traditions, it is the role of the opposition to criticize the government. This is what members of the present government were doing when they were in the opposition. In my opinion, the Canadians have well understood this game of the system and this is why they have ceased to put their trust in parliamentary members who are indulging in this practice. In fact, this practice leads members to show greater concern for their political aims than for the well being of the people.

I am making these remarks because I share the feelings of those who are deeply disappointed at the attitude taken by certain members, merely bringing up arguments that will serve their political ambitions when, as we all know, more than a million families are waiting for this legislation that will enable them to get a supplementary income, long awaited and precious to them.

To what extent are we aware of this responsibility? When will the people be able to receive assistance from their representatives in the House, and that in a positive and objective fashion? Should we consider making some changes in the system, which would probably allow hon. members to express themselves more freely? We all know that there are awkward party policies. I never hesitated to say publicly that the party line often involves the conscience and the freedom of the member. But if these views are shared by some, I believe it is high time that certain changes be made in order that hon. members who support legislation that makes any sense at all may be able to do so without getting into any trouble.

• (1740)

Finally, I believe that the Canadian people want representatives who will defend a policy of good sense, representatives who will definitely show good sense in the interest of the community.

I say this because of some very favourable comments I made with regard to the legislation. An hon. member,