

Of course the then minister thought that was bad. He disapproved of that. Yet that is precisely what the present minister is proposing. There is no question in my mind that a person with a large family, entitled to unemployment insurance benefits, if he only gets two thirds as proposed will require extra to make up the difference between what he is getting in unemployment insurance and what he requires. He will require benefits through welfare in order to live.

The then minister made some calculations and said:

By increasing unemployment insurance benefits substantially we will effect savings of some \$80 million under the Canada Assistance Plan, \$40 million to the federal treasury and \$40 million to the provinces.

I suggest that what the present minister will take away from the unemployed who qualify for the extra benefits will have to be paid in substantial part through welfare payments. Now let me quote the last sentence from what the minister said in 1971:

... the increase in benefits will postpone the day when people chronically unemployed must turn to welfare if they have no other sources of income. It can be said that the benefit structure has been developed by people who care about people.

I suggest to the minister that the converse of what the then minister said is happening today. This benefit detriment is being prepared by a minister and officials who do not care about people.

One of the main arguments the minister gives for the elimination of the dependency rate is the idea that unemployment insurance benefits are strictly a wage insurance plan. If that is so, and benefits for those with dependants have no place in the program, the insistence by the government on the insurance aspect of this program, to say the least is in contradiction to the refusal of the government to provide insurance to people aged 65 who have been and are working.

There are many people who over the years have been considered eligible for benefits and who will never pay in sufficient to insure themselves. I refer to people such as fishermen, those who take part-time work in the woods and so on. Of course in a theoretical way I could agree that their needs ought to be met in another way than through an employment insurance fund, but we have not developed that kind of a comprehensive social security system. Liberal governments may talk about it but they talk about it as taking place some day in cuckoo land, in the dim distant future when none of us, including the new 20-year old members, will be here if we wait for the kind of people we now have in the Liberal government to act.

One member opposite who does not have the courage to stand up says that now they are in power they have to be responsible. Is he suggesting that in the years when they were not in power they were irresponsible? I never pay attention to those dough heads at the back who just bray and do not get up to speak.

An hon. Member: You are wasting time.

Mr. Orlikow: If I am wasting time then I can at least take the pleasure that I am inflicting the same waste of time on members opposite. If we depended on the back-benchers on the government side, the whole business of parliament could be accomplished in about three days in a

Unemployment Insurance Act

year because they would just come down here, press a button, say yes to anything any minister said, and then they would go home. So long as we have a democratic system and so long as there are opposition members of parliament, those opposition members have a right to speak. It does not bother me that the member opposite interjects. I have a right to speak and I will decide when and for how long I speak. I will not wait for some God-head in the front rows, as back-benchers on the other side do, to tell me how or when to speak.

Perhaps I might return to the argument I was attempting to put forward. Let me say that in our opposition to this provision in the bill we are in pretty good non-partisan apolitical company. We have as company the Canadian Council on Social Development, the chairman of which, if not at the moment, until recently was a very close relative of one of our cabinet ministers. Therefore it cannot be too radical an organization. The council has opposed this proposition. Mr. Baetz, the executive director of the Canadian Council on Social Development, said:

The low-income earner is not only hit inequitably with a 20 per cent increase in his premiums but the provision in the bill to eliminate the 75 per cent benefit rate for claimants with dependants hits the low-income earners since they are one of the two categories that had received this special assistance.

He said further:

Now admittedly it has been argued in many countries that unemployment insurance benefits should not take dependants into consideration since wages also do not take this into account. Wages do not take into account the size of the family. I will say this, that I have, on occasion, theoretically argued that point as well.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but the time allotted to him has expired.

[Translation]

Mr. Eudore Allard (Rimouski): Mr. Speaker, since several members of the opposition said great truths about the amendments to Bill C-69, I think it would be superfluous on my part to further comment on the amendments to this bill.

The fact still remains that one clause among others drew my attention. I refer to section 24, subsections (2) and (3), dealing with rates of benefits and qualifying weeks.

Often, Mr. Speaker, one finds that the last 20 weeks of insurable employment do not generally correspond to the salary earned in the business, for in businesses hiring on a seasonal basis one usually finds a reduction in working hours corresponding to the demand for production.

So one may conclude that it is normal for an employee who at a certain moment was hired for a period of 40 hours of work to reduce his hours either because of a temporary slowdown in production or still because of the forthcoming closing down of the business. And that employee leaves his work voluntarily because it is easy to imagine that if the eventual claimant persists in working at reduced hours for a few weeks before voluntarily leaving his job he will be penalized twice because, first, he will be penalized under subsection (1) of section 41 for a period of three weeks under the present legislation but as soon as the amendments that were brought in are accepted it will be for a period of six weeks because then the employee will have left his job voluntarily. Out of spite there will be a change