

Unemployment Insurance Act

If that procedure were established, it is obvious that even tomorrow morning, the industrialist would play his part. The state would then have to play its own role. As fewer hours of work would give less money to the worker, the state would compensate for this reduced income by increasing family allowances, and granting a substantial subsidy to mothers who have to stay at home to take care of their family.

I should like the cabinet to study those questions, because unemployment figures prove that the present government has failed. Moreover, the government should study the possibility of making necessary improvements.

I am sorry that I have to direct some blame to the new minister, whether the regular minister or the new minister appointed last week. They are two hon. members whom I should not like to blame in the least. Let us take the hon. Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacEachen) except for blaming him because he has accomplished little in the field of family allowances, we owe him nothing but congratulations. It is unfortunate that he had to replace today the one who is absent, but, in any event, it is a *fait accompli*. Today's situation is due to the minister's absence, just like other situations are due to mass resignations. We are living through a period of resignations. The Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) has resigned. The Minister of Trade and Commerce (Mr. Winters) is considering his resignation. The Minister of Industry (Mr. Drury) is thinking about leaving politics. In order to resign, Mr. Speaker, I presume it is necessary to have well-lined pockets.

Nevertheless in spite of all those departures, I hope there will be enough goodwill left in the cabinet to look after those who have empty pockets indeed and lack the necessities of life.

[English]

Mr. Howard Johnston (Okanagan-Revelstoke): Mr. Speaker, I should like to make a few remarks in connection with this bill to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act. This is one more of a series of bills that are confessions of failure on the part of the government to tackle inflation adequately. Amounts of money that seemed sufficient a few years ago to provide for the temporary needs of people are now grossly inadequate because of the spiral of inflation, and it seems unfortunate that as each of these confessions

comes along it has a tendency to add to this spiralling effect.

We in Social Credit have for a long time advocated various changes and reforms in monetary policy. We have advocated various moves which would lower interest rates in this country but have always been subjected to a great deal of criticism as a result. It has been said that the system now in operation is the best of all possible systems, that everything will work out all right in the end and it cannot be tampered with. Yet, Mr. Speaker, over and over again we see that the present system is not adequate to meet the problems of the day and that parliament is constantly called upon to patch up, to amend, to provide a stopgap or fill-in in an effort to try to do something to ameliorate the situation. Parliament attempts to do these things without any guarantee or assurance that the government is really moving to solve the basic economic problems that confront the country.

We have had no assurance even that the whole Unemployment Insurance Act will shortly be reviewed or, much more important than the review of a single piece of legislation, that the act will be reviewed in the light of the Income Tax Act as well as a whole host of proposals for taxation reform. I speak not just of the Carter report but of the reactions to the report, some of which have produced extremely constructive proposals that merit a great deal of study on the part of the government. They are proposals that should be studied along with the policy in relation to welfare payments, pension payments and the whole vast network that has been built up piece by piece through the years, each piece having been added without relation to the rest of the system.

Let me mention the minimum wage laws we have today. Even now members of the house are advocating that the minimum wage provided for be increased considerably. Just because such a move is advocated does not mean it will necessarily be put into practice. Nevertheless that suggestion has been made. We realize, of course, that the minimum wage legislation tends to increase the pool of unemployed, of whom we have a great many in Canada, because we have failed to develop our educational facilities. We have never had any adequate proposals in relation to providing the necessary finances for this kind of non-profit, public institution. We have lacked any sound system of public financing through the years.