

figures, I may say, are normally about three months late in reaching hon. members. What measure of control does that offer? Second, he says the Minister of Finance (Mr. Turner) publishes a statement with respect to the situation of the fund. What control do we have over that? We do not debate the statement. In the third place, he says the Unemployment Insurance Commission publishes an annual report. How on earth can the publication of an annual report give parliament any control over what is spent? Fourth, he tells us that the financial statement is certified by the Auditor General. So what? What control does that give us over the expenditure of funds by the commission. Fifth, he says that a detailed financial statement is passed to the Public Accounts Committee for examination. This is normally done a year after the event. What control does that give parliament over the expenditure of funds? Sixth, he says the Minister of Finance inserts an item in his main estimates which includes the cost of the government's share.

• (1550)

I agree with the Minister of Finance that one of the requirements placed upon him is to put such an item in his main estimates, which are going to be before us very shortly. If the minister must make provision for the government's share of this fund, why on earth does the government not know now what will be the projected cost? They cannot take the position they have been taking, on the one hand, of not being able to supply us with information as to the projected cost, yet on the other hand take the position that they will give parliament a definitive and accurate estimate in the main estimates that will be placed before us in a matter of days.

Seventh, the hon. member said that one factor of control was that the main estimates were referred to the various committees. What control does that give parliament over the appropriation of the funds now being asked for in unlimited amounts? Eighth, the hon. member said that the public accounts committee examines the estimates. Again I ask, what control does that give parliament?

None of the ten points advanced by the hon. member for Verdun in support of his argument that parliament retains control over the appropriation of these funds is valid. The hon. member said that we were downgrading and defeating by relay. That is not so. The members of this party take second position to no one with regard to the philosophy of unemployment insurance. It was this party which designed the first unemployment insurance legislation under Bennett in 1935. He did not stay in office long enough to get the legislation passed; that occurred in a subsequent administration. These historical developments go back not 30 years, as the hon. member for Verdun said, but 42 or 43 years, and it was this party's philosophy that resulted in the unemployment insurance system in this country today.

The hon. member then took great satisfaction from citing the relatively higher benefits that had been paid out this year as opposed to those paid last year and the year before. I say that instead of taking satisfaction from the greatly increased benefits that were paid out, he and his government should be ashamed that billions of dollars have had to be paid to an unemployed work force, a

Unemployment Insurance Act

condition brought about by the government's own deliberate creation of unemployment. The government and their supporters have nothing to be proud about in saying that huge sums are being paid out. It is rather sad that the economy of this country is in such a state today that we have such a large number of unemployed persons on the rolls as a direct result of government policy.

The hon. member put his finger on the root of the trouble when he said that this was the government's fault. Truly it is. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) wholeheartedly and callously announced he intended to create unemployment in order to fight inflation. While he said that on the one hand, his other ministers on the other hand, namely the Minister of Finance of that day—a course that has been followed by the present Minister of Finance—ran about the country saying we were in boom times, that the economy was boiling, that we in this country were flush. And today we have mounting rolls of unemployed. What we on this side are objecting to on behalf, in my view, of the vast majority of Canadians is precisely the fact that we are being obliged to pay out such huge sums to the unemployed of the country, people who have become unemployed as a result of the heartless and inhuman policy pursued by the Prime Minister and his government.

The hon. member then took satisfaction from asserting that there has been a drop in the numbers of unemployed during the last month. The figures are exactly the same as the figures for last year. What satisfaction can the government take in having advanced not one inch toward reducing unemployment in this country over the course of one year, a situation created by their own deliberate tactics to cure inflation?

As hon. members pointed out during the question period today, the number of unemployed in the Atlantic provinces has shown a rather dramatic rise, a very tragic rise. What information were we given when hon. members on this side asked what would be the policies of the government to cure this sad state of affairs? The hon. member for Saint Hyacinthe asked what the government had in mind to cure the sad rise in unemployment figures in the province of Quebec, but he, too, received no reply. The government have no plans. They are as bankrupt as the unemployment insurance fund.

Then, we had this twisted philosophy of the hon. member for Verdun of adopting the position that somehow it is beneficial to the economy, in priority to everything else, to spend huge sums on unemployment insurance because, he said, it created jobs, because there would be more money in circulation to demand goods and services, which in turn created jobs. He accuses us, if we oppose that philosophy, of being against the poor, that we are trying to ride to power on the backs of the poor.

Surely, any rational person can see the argument that we on this side are advancing—the argument being advanced by the vast majority of Canadians—namely, that we do not want to live in a society that has to pull itself up by its own bootstraps. We do not want to live in a society where everyone is on unemployment insurance benefits. We do not want to live in a society where everyone is on welfare. Yet that is the philosophy being propounded by the hon. member for Verdun.