

*Increased Cost of Living*

trialists and the government are also to blame. The latter should apply the necessary controls. As mentioned earlier, we are always afraid of imposing controls and I think that because of the importance of this problem, the government, as the administrator of this country, should nevertheless discharge its responsibilities and will have to adopt unpopular solutions if we really want to serve the interests of society without partisanship.

It often happens that as members of Parliament, we know that a measure is unpopular but it is our duty as responsible people to adopt this measure. Even though a price freeze may be unpopular for certain groups, I must admit that some members are in favour of it and have the courage of proposing it.

Of course, one might reject this suggestion as inadequate, while acknowledging the major efforts made by the government. Once again we know that huge amounts of money have been invested to improve the unemployment situation, etc., but we also know that in spite of those millions spent over the last five years, unemployment is now three times as high as in 1968.

Is the government the only one to blame? Of course not. Due to circumstances, some problems arise; the economy is unsound but we would often be tempted to justify ourselves by saying that it is worse in the United States, that other European countries are in a worse position, that others have more problems than we do. We would be easily satisfied if we entertained such thoughts.

The government must assume its responsibilities. The whole country hopes that our Parliament, political parties, members of Parliament will succeed in finding again an objectivity which is not often seen in this House. In the face of such an important problem, difficulties and dangers involved, when we speak about inflation and economic uncertainty, which many people are understandably concerned about, I suggest that as members of Parliament, we must go beyond partisanship and try to convince the government and urge it to approve specific measures likely not only to reassure the Canadian electorates, but to introduce changes which might seem to be concessions on the part of the government to the extent that they would be likely to reassure people and strengthen our economy. I believe that we must act in this direction.

Therefore, any proposal, at present, must be seriously considered, because we must admit that the government, in spite of its efforts, has not succeeded in finding the right solution.

For my part, Mr. Speaker, I shall not boast that I have the right solution, but I suggest that important meetings with businessmen, industrialists and union members as well as a price freeze would not be enough, considering the very high level of prices. But I feel that a 90-day period of reflection could be extended, should it prove too short, as we know full well that a long period of price freeze should be accompanied by a wage freeze. I therefore believe that we should weigh carefully the suggestions that have been made. Above all, we tried to be objective, that our Canadian parliament might find a solution to this serious problem.

[Mr. La Salle.]

[English]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. It being ten o'clock p.m., it is my duty to inform the House that pursuant to section 11 of Standing Order 58 the proceedings on the motion have expired.

**PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT  
MOTION**

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 40 deemed to have been moved.

**UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE—COMMISSION POLICY  
RESPECTING UNEMPLOYED AGRICULTURAL WORKERS  
SEEKING BENEFITS**

**Mr. William Knowles (Norfolk-Haldimand):** Mr. Speaker, on February 26 I raised a question with the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Andras) concerning the activities of the Unemployment Insurance Commission, more particularly the benefit control officers in the area I represent. While three months have passed since then, the whole question of unemployment and the way it is being administered is still quite relevant. As a matter of fact, we received just last month the interim report of the advisory committee on unemployment insurance, and I shall refer to that in my remarks tonight.

The matter about which I am most concerned is the treatment of seasonal agricultural workers in my riding. The county of Norfolk is a cash crop area, perhaps one of the most concentrated cash crop areas in Canada. We are heavy employers of seasonal labour to harvest our crops. A great many of these people are of origins other than Anglo-Saxon, many having come to our country from Belgium, Hungary, Germany, Poland and many other mid-European countries. The people of the first generation of these immigrants are still active in the agricultural industry in this area and many are unable to speak English except in a very rudimentary way. Some can scarcely understand it when it is spoken to them, and they cannot read it let alone write it.

It is against this background that I wish to discuss with the government and the minister, or his representative, the problem that has arisen as a result of this situation. Seasonal agricultural workers have been forced into the unemployment insurance program. Some have been disqualified and disqualified almost on a wholesale basis, chiefly because they are seasonal workers. This is their type of work. They did not want to come under unemployment insurance in the first place, and previously they were excluded. The present situation is that if they work 25 days or less, they do not have to come under the plan, or if they earn \$250 or less they are not included; beyond that they are included and have no choice.

● (2200)

I do not want to be critical all the way through, but I would suggest to the government that these people now be