

Unemployment Insurance

[Translation]

ENERGYPROPOSED OIL PIPELINE EXTENSION TO MONTREAL—
REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION

Mr. Henry Latulippe (Compton): Mr. Speaker, under Standing Order 43, I ask the unanimous consent of the House to propose a motion of extremely urgent necessity.

Since the energy crisis entails serious problems, the government should give first consideration to the extension of the pipeline from Sarnia to Montreal. In addition, the House should specially examine the most efficient means to finance the project. Since it is a collective project, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Fortin):

That this project be carried out.

Mr. Speaker: The House has heard the motion of the hon. member. Under Standing Order 43, this motion requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there such a consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is not unanimity and the hon. member's motion cannot be put.

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[English]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCEDISENTITLEMENTS IMPOSED BY BENEFIT CONTROL
OFFICERS—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO
MOVE MOTION

Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43. In view of the revelations by the Unemployment Insurance Advisory Committee that overzealous activities on the part of benefit control officers resulted in large numbers of claimants being unjustly disqualified from benefits to which they were rightly entitled, and in view of the minister's admission to the House yesterday that he is aware of the occurrence of such excesses on the part of the benefit control officers, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. Neale):

That this House instruct the minister to undertake, with his department, a case by case review of all disentanglements and disqualifications imposed by benefit control officers between January 1, 1973 and November 1, 1973, with a view to ensuring that all improperly disqualified claimants receive their just entitlement.

Mr. Speaker: Is there unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Speaker: There is not unanimity.

[Mr. Speaker.]

EXTERNAL AFFAIRSSTATEMENT BY MINISTER ON LEAKING OF
CONFIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS

Hon. Mitchell Sharp (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, in the House on November 16 I expressed my concern on the matter of recent leaks of confidential government communications. I should like to stress that this is indeed an extremely serious matter. If allowed to continue, such practices could impair our relations with other countries and undermine the effective conduct of government business with foreign governments. Here in Ottawa, it would also interfere with exchanges of information essential to the conduct of business among government departments and agencies. It is therefore imperative that the matter be dealt with without delay.

What is involved, I suggest, is not our attitude toward this or that government of Chile. What is involved is also not a matter of whether we feel concern over the hardships or dangers for a good many people arising from the events in Chile. On this matter, I would have thought there would be little or no disagreement among most Canadians.

● (1410)

What is involved is simply a question of whether confidential communications are to be secure. On this matter, too, I would hope that most, if not all, Canadians would agree.

I am very much aware of the concern of this House on this matter. On November 16, the hon. member for Esquimalt-Saanich (Mr. Munro) inquired whether there had been an investigation with a view to a possible dismissal for the divulgence of classified documents from my department. At that time, I replied that an investigation was under way. This investigation has been a very thorough one and has necessarily taken a little time and a good deal of effort. As a result of these inquiries, I am confident that we have identified the person responsible for the leaks. That person is being informed. The long established procedures for dealing with such cases will now be followed.

I am hopeful that the action we are now taking will ensure that a breach of trust of this kind will not recur. I see no need to identify publicly the person responsible. Since there has been some suggestion that the telegrams may have come from someone in the Department of External Affairs and since that might give the worrying impression that those who are regularly handling the country's most sensitive diplomatic communications are not to be trusted with them, I should say immediately and categorically that these telegrams were not leaked by anyone in that department or at any of our missions abroad. It would not be in the public interest to go further regarding the source of the leak.

I should inform the House that one of the messages to which public reference has been made is not a genuine telegram. It is in fact a message specially prepared by the security services of my department to help in identifying the location of the leaks.