

Government Orders

• (1635)

I am against this bill. I urge all my colleagues to vote against this bill.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Before resuming debate, it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: the hon. member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception—National defence; the hon. member for Hastings—Frontenac—Lennox and Addington—Indian affairs; the hon. member for Calgary Northeast—Revenue Canada; the hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier—Language minorities.

The hon. member for Nickel Belt.

Mr. John R. Rodriguez (Nickel Belt): Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words on the report stage of Bill C-113.

I want to congratulate my colleague, the member for Timmins—Chapleau for the excellent amendments he has introduced. I want to particularly address my remarks to Motions Nos. 16, 17 and 18.

The first thing that strikes me, and it has struck a lot of people who are familiar with the way unemployment insurance works, is that a person who applies for UI has a two-week waiting period. Often it takes longer than the two-week waiting period for the agents at UI to collect all the relevant information so the decision can be made on the application. Often it will run to three or four weeks. The client does not get cards and certainly does not get any cheque from UI. The client may get a response from UI eventually as to the disposition of his or her application.

My colleague has introduced a very logical amendment to ensure that time limits are adhered to so the decision is rendered to the claimant within the two-week waiting period.

By law the employer must provide the claimant with the separation certificate. If the employer does not, it has to be reported to the commission. This can cause a considerable amount of delay because the claim cannot be set up until the separation certificate is received.

The way it works now, the client informs the commission that he or she has been unable to get the separation certificate and the commission then goes after the employer. If the employer does not provide the separation certificate, the employee is asked to bring in the pay stubs and a claim is set up based on those pay stubs. That all takes time.

With the advent of new technologies in the processing of applications and the computerization which has taken place, surely it is possible to adhere to a two-week waiting period as my colleague has suggested. If the employer does not come up with a separation certificate in two weeks, then a claim would be set up for the client based on the stubs if the claimant has them, or some verification by the client of what his or her pay was. The claim is set in motion for the claimant, and the employer is dealt with according to the law if he has not provided the separation certificate or other information that is required. I think this is a very appropriate amendment and I do not think it will create any problems on the part of the UI agents or those who process the claims. I think it is quite possible to have a two-week period within which a decision is made and rendered and the claim is processed.

• (1640)

It seems to me that my colleague's Motion No. 17 requires the commission to maintain statistical data. I understand that when the committee held hearings my colleague asked witnesses for statistical information about those who were disintitled without good reason. He asked what those reasons were.

He discovered that 190,000 clients were disintitled without good reason in 1991. When he asked for the statistical information with respect to the reasons Mr. Gordon McFee, who is the director of policy and legislation development, Department of Employment and Immigration, told my colleague that the precise reason for the disintitlement of these 190,000 is not coded but the fact that the claim was adjudicated negatively is. The way one comes up with the 190,000 figure might have been a simulation.

Decisions are being made on amending the Unemployment Insurance Act in Bill C-113 which are not based on information. The government is not able to determine whether the information on which it has based its proposed amendments is really appropriate because it does not have the statistical information. My colleague asked if one could assume theoretically that some of the reasons given for leaving employment may have been valid even though a negative decision was reached. He was told that was possible and there may have been negative decisions given for reasons that were totally appropriate. They may have been just, but we do not know that because we do not have the statistical information.