

Employment and Immigration

Some of the Liberal members on the committee told me that the work sharing program was innovative, that the job creation proposals were innovative, and that the job training program was innovative. I say the work sharing programs are not innovative. Indeed they have been around since the pyramids were built. They were the first job creation program in history. I suppose in those days the Egyptians would have said that they were job creation programs. They were job creation programs, but at very high human cost.

We now have the new Pharaoh with his hair cut and his blue suit, telling us that he has some really creative job programs going forward into the past, into the 1930's.

I hear the hon. member for Hamilton Mountain (Mr. MacFarlane) braying. All he can do is count up to 20.

● (2010)

The government should get about the business of changing the federal Labour Code so that it does not remain a managerial right to order workers to work overtime.

The United Auto Workers made an excellent presentation before the committee. They urged the government to make changes in the federal Labour Code so that workers are not forced to work overtime by management. The Telecommunications Workers Union, which represents employees of Bell Canada, also urged the government to make changes in that code to determine emergency conditions under which management can call those workers out to lay cable. They were being called out on Saturdays to work overtime laying cable. Certainly that is something management might consider being an emergency, but in the eyes of anyone else that is not an emergency. There is the case of Griffin in Winnipeg, Manitoba, where workers are on strike. They are demanding a right to make optional whether a worker works overtime or not. There are a million people or more unemployed in this country, and yet there are companies standing on their managerial right to order workers to work overtime.

The minister is advocating work sharing. The unemployment insurance fund would supplement the work sharing program. If that is what the government wants to do, then it ought to come from general revenues and not from the unemployment insurance fund. The government continues to give the impression to the country that it is these workers who are costing the taxpayers \$3.8 billion. It has the gall to tell us the unemployment insurance fund is going to cost \$3.8 billion in 1977. Projected over next year it will cost \$4 billion. The changes it is talking about will supposedly be a saving to the taxpayer, but next year taxpayers will find out the cost for unemployment insurance will be as high as ever. Do you know who will be blamed? The people participating in work sharing, the people participating in job creation and the people on training will be blamed. If the minister wants to implement his job creation program, then it must be done out of general revenues and not out of the unemployment insurance fund.

[Mr. Rodriguez.]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his allotted time has expired. Is there unanimous consent for the hon. member to continue?

An hon. Member: No.

Mr. Lincoln M. Alexander (Hamilton West): Mr. Speaker, I will not be long in speaking to these amendments.

An hon. Member: You have 20 minutes.

Mr. Alexander: I do not think I will require 20 minutes because we have already been through it all. There has been an exhaustive search in the standing committee. We heard a number of witnesses, and I am satisfied with those who appeared. I thank them for their attendance because it opened up a new avenue, as far as I was concerned. It was one of a few instances where labour and management were able to get together.

The motions in total deal with the departmental use of unemployment insurance funds. The minister hopes to realize a saving as a result of the change in the eight week period and other matters contained in the bill. Both labour and management registered their concern and disappointment at the fact that the minister appeared to use these funds in terms of job training, job creation, and work sharing. They believe UIC funds are accumulated, and because of employee-employer feelings should be directed to the financial benefit of employees. They did not take an extremely hard line on job training and job creation. They would like to know how it works. They are concerned about the fact that we have had a lot of job training schemes and we do not know who is being trained for what. They are a little suspicious about the job training proposition which the minister advocates. As my party's critic, I cannot say I am not going to give the minister a chance in this regard.

We on this side of the House, in the past few months particularly, have called on the government to create jobs, or to create a climate whereby the private sector can create jobs. I am prepared to give the minister the benefit of the doubt with respect to job training. Training in needed skills is required in our contemporary society, rather than training for obsolete jobs. There is some concern about how this program is going to work, but hopefully it will realize jobs for the Atlantic provinces and the province of Quebec which have been hit with high unemployment.

I am surprised with my friends to the left, the socialists. The NDP have always cried about job creation. Here is an opportunity which may not be perfect, but those hon. members are saying that they do not want the government to create any jobs.

Mr. Rodriguez: You do not do it with UIC funds.

Mr. Alexander: Is he not a loud mouth, Mr. Speaker? I have been listening to his bombastic, useless rhetoric. Of course he is famous for that. I have also listened to him repeating himself, but I did not say a word. Now I have stood