

and with great feeling and passion for the people he represents in this House, unlike his silent colleague, the hon. member for Saint John-Lancaster.

We know that the province of New Brunswick has said that if this bill passes in its present form its results will be the equivalent of the biggest industry in Saint John, New Brunswick, closing down. I do not know what the total income of the forest industry is, but I suggest there are not very many industries in New Brunswick that pay out \$40 million a year. I believe that is the estimate of what New Brunswick will lose. That is \$40 million a year put directly into the economy of the province of New Brunswick. Is it any wonder they took the unprecedented move of asking to appear before a standing committee of this House?

I wonder what the hon. member for Saint John-Lancaster would say if the Irving companies in Saint John, or in New Brunswick, were to decide they were going to close down all their operations and move to the Bahamas or the United States. The hon. member would be up the next day on a motion of urgent and pressing necessity, asking to adjourn this House. The impact of this bill will do exactly that to his province, yet he sits there mute. Shame! The hon. member does not do justice to the people who preceded him from the riding of Saint John-Lancaster.

If you look at the impact of the bill, Mr. Speaker, you will see how inequitable it is going to be. In Ontario it is going to affect 1.8 per cent of the claimants. In the province of New Brunswick it is going to affect 4.1 per cent of claimants. What is fair about that? In other words, an area where unemployment is the highest is an area that is going to be hardest hit by this bill. What could be more unfair? What could be more unjust than that kind of situation?

Surely if it is abuse the minister is after, there are abusers of the unemployment insurance scheme just as there are abusers of legal aid, just as there are abusers in the legal profession, and just as the medical profession abuses medicare. You will find abusers all over the place. This is not peculiar to unemployment insurance recipients.

I suggest that most of the abuses take place in parts of the country that will be the least hurt by this bill, namely, the most highly urbanized regions, paradoxically the regions of the country where unemployment is the lowest. All you have to do is go down the list. In the province of Alberta 1 per cent of the recipients of unemployment insurance will be affected by this bill, as opposed to 4.7 per cent of the recipients of unemployment insurance in the province of Newfoundland.

In addition, let us consider the special study which was commissioned by the minister's department into the hidden rate of unemployment. That study was put out by Statistics Canada, and we had to drag it out of them screaming. We knew it was under way and we placed questions on the order paper about it. Somebody arrived on Parliament Hill late Friday, like a thief in the night, and handed it in hoping nobody would notice it. Thank God somebody picked it up and as a result the government now knows what we have been saying for a long time, that the real rate of unemployment in

Unemployment Insurance Act

this country is much more severe. Indeed, it is about 25 per cent more severe than the government pretends.

We know that the higher the rate of unemployment, the greater the rate of hidden unemployment. In my own province of Newfoundland, for that month they identified, 25,000 people were shown as unemployed when in actual fact, according to the study, there were 35,000 additional people unemployed, bringing the total to 60,000. When the government was saying that one million people nationally were unemployed, the actual fact was that there were 1,300,000 people unemployed in that month of March. These are people who do not draw unemployment insurance—I refer to the additional 25 per cent—because they have been unemployed so long they have become discouraged workers and are no longer counted. They have to sit around waiting for seasonal jobs, and these will be cut out from under them because of the terms of unemployment insurance. There are no other jobs for which they can look. Those are the people who will be hurt by this bill, the discouraged workers, amounting to 250,000 people in March.

● (1622)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order. I regret to inform the hon. member that his allotted time has expired.

Mr. Peters: Go ahead.

Some hon. Members: Consent.

Some hon. Members: No.

[*Translation*]

Mr. C.-A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, while listening to the previous speaker a while ago I was quite surprised to hear him say he is against the bill because most members of his party voted in favour of it in the House. Still I hope that all members of his party will eventually vote against this measure because in this party we are totally against it. That is why I take the opportunity of the debate on that amendment motion moved by the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez), motion No. 1, an amendment we would have liked to put forward ourselves, but we are pleased that the hon. member is doing it for us, the important thing being that the amendment is being discussed.

Mr. Speaker, maybe you will recall that we made few interventions at the second reading stage. As this legislation seemed to us so discriminatory and so ridiculous, we agreed to send it to committee to see which amendment the government or the minister would propose while it was there. We were quite disappointed when we noted that all amendments had been moved by opposition members, amendments which will die as all others, because the Liberal party has the majority. That is why today we feel obliged to deal with amendment No. 1, and we are doing now what we could have done at the second reading stage.