

my opinion, it is time that we stop talking about unemployment all the time. We should talk about employment instead.

Mr. Speaker, this is how we can encourage people to work. Let us stop talking about unemployment and telling them: You are like this or like that. We talk about that too much, even in this House. We create psychological problems for the people when we should be trying to do the opposite. We should encourage people and show them that there are not only bad things in this country, but also some good. We must try to strike a balance.

In any case, Mr. Speaker, I hope that this clause will be amended, unless the minister can provide further clarification. I believe there is some confusion between clause 1 and part VIII. If the minister can explain this and make me understand this clause, I may be able to support him.

● (1652)

[English]

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, as has been mentioned, this bill received considerable attention in the committee and some references have been made to the relationship of various committee members to the bill as well as to the fact that the representation on the committee was not necessarily fair or equitable. I presume the hon. member for Hochelaga (Mr. Lavoie), who has just spoken, had that in mind when he made his comments because he also comes from an area where unemployment is a considerable problem and where the problems of the individual become more apparent than the \$1 billion, in nice round figures, which the government has decided it wants to save.

It is all very simple, Mr. Speaker, and it has not much to do with employment. Nor has it much to do with unemployment, I suppose. It involves every Canadian, and there are one million of them who are unemployed. Individually they believe that if they go through the various stages which they are asked to go through to locate a job, then they have fulfilled their obligation, but that the government has not fulfilled its obligation in making work available for them. Because they have done what they are supposed to do—when they were working they paid money into the insurance fund—now that they are unemployed, they should be able to receive their benefits.

That is the problem as seen from the point of view of the individual. When we look at the problem from the point of view of the country as a whole, we are ashamed to admit that we have one million unemployed and that we have to raise \$2 billion to add to the insurance fund which was established a number of years ago when we thought that a 4 per cent rate of unemployment was too high. When the individual looks at this plan, he hears the government saying to him: "No, Joe, we will change the rules now; although you have been paying in for years, your benefits will change now."

There is another group of people who are watching the individual, Joe Doe, and wondering what these changes will mean to Joe Doe in relation to them. I am referring to the municipalities of this country. The government and the Con-

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servative party are saying that there are many people who abuse the unemployment insurance program. They say that every day, and I am sure most Canadians are saying that. It is quite true that many people in organized labour, as well as housewives and people on the street, do say that. Everybody knows somebody who knows somebody who has a friend who has taken advantage of the unemployment insurance program.

That may be true, and if it is, it is a pretty sad state of affairs; but we members of parliament can plug those loopholes if they are as broad as people seem to think they are. But that is not what the government is doing. The government has said: "We must get rid of the expenditures; we must cut out \$1 billion." If, because we have an excess of unemployment we are paying out more than the amount for which the plan was originally designed, and if, out of that \$2 billion, there is a waste of 25 per cent, or half a billion dollars, then the other half will have to be built up by the municipalities because we are saying that the need is still there and will have to be met in some way.

It is very interesting that the various provincial governments have indicated that there would be a large drain on their treasuries and they were not sure how large it would be. The figures varied anywhere from \$10 million to \$50 million in some of the provinces. That seems to be quite a large sum to be playing with.

I think the plan has been unfair in another way. The minister indicated that we should have had some serious, intelligent discussion of the bill. Surely one or two good ideas have been put forward by the ten witnesses who appeared before the committee, and surely the minister would agree that some cogent arguments were put forward by one or two of the witnesses on some aspects of the bill. Surely the minister will admit also that the hon. member for Hochelaga had a good point to make, that his parliamentary secretary who gives him advice had some good points to make somewhere along the line, or even that some good amendments were put forward at some time in the back rooms.

The minister himself did not amend the bill in any way and he did not make any major concessions on any important aspects of the bill. To be fair to the minister, let me point out that he toyed with one part of the bill that is probably more complicated than any other, and that is the totally new concept of the two-tier system. I think the minister would agree that the new concept, to be realistic, would have to be considered in a pretty broad philosophical way rather than by way of an amendment to the existing act. If the implementation of the two-tier payment system were to be considered seriously, it would have to be considered initially from a philosophical point of view and new legislation would have to be brought forward. In my opinion, the minister did not consider any of the proposals put forward by the witnesses who came before the committee, and he did not want to hear any more witnesses because he did not listen to the ten who had been before the committee. There is no point listening to 100 witnesses if you decide not to listen to one.

May I call it five o'clock, Mr. Speaker?