

*Unemployment Insurance Act*

they, like many other Canadians, are doing seasonal work, so that periodically they are out of work for a month or two during the winter, they are not going to get any unemployment insurance benefits during such period.

I think the government is making a very serious mistake in putting this provision in the bill. I hope that even at this late date the minister can persuade his colleagues—I have the feeling I do not need to persuade the minister—to agree to withdraw clause 10 from the bill so that we may continue, as we have in the past, to allow people over 65, if they wish, to carry on working and to enjoy the benefits of the unemployment insurance program. If they do not want to work and if the social security measures we have provided are adequate for them to retire, then I would be very happy to see them retire. But I do not think that in a free society we should do everything we can to encourage people who want to continue in the labour force and earn an income, at the same time enjoying the benefits of the unemployment insurance program to which many of them have contributed for a great many years.

● (1620)

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)):** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)):** The question is on motion No. 11 in the name of the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander), and motion No. 12 in the name of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion? All those in favour will please say yea.

**Some hon. Members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)):** All those opposed will please say nay.

**Some hon. Members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)):** In my opinion the nays have it.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner (London East)):** Pursuant to section (II) of Standing Order 75, the recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

**Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming)** moved:

Motion No. 16.

That Bill C-69, an Act to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1971, be amended by deleting clause 16.

He said: Mr. Speaker, after listening to the remarks of the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands (Mr. Douglas), it seemed to me that the minister did not really give any leadership to his colleagues who went along with this usual practice. This makes one wonder if there is really any point in discussing anything about this bill, because members do not have to listen or pay attention—all they have to do is vote. It makes me wonder if we all come from the same country.

[Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands).]

I have one extra person in my office for the simple reason that I have to handle all unemployment insurance matters in my area. If I did not have these problems I would not need that extra person. I am sure there are other members in this House who have the same situation, and if they intend to be around here again they had better pay attention to these problems. There are many areas in this country with as much unemployment as in my area, yet the representatives sit here complacently, dispassionately following this usual practice. I am becoming convinced that I should be making this argument to those nabobs in the gallery, because obviously the minister did not contribute much input in respect of the last motion. He expressed his sympathy and realized that the arguments he was putting up were not very good.

**Mr. Andras:** Not at all.

**Mr. Peters:** He indicated there was not really much money going to old age pensioners; and particularly in the northern climate where the people have to pay higher heating bills during the wintertime it is not much money. There is not much left over if they are living only on old age pensions and do not hold down part-time jobs. This is one of the serious complaints we receive.

It may be that we should not waste time passing bills here in this House, but putting the Unemployment Insurance Commission in a position to make its own regulations. Then if those people found anything developing which they did not like, they could make another regulation to cover the situation. This would solve a lot of problem. It would certainly solve a lot of my problems, as a member from an area where there is considerable unemployment. Apparently that is not true of many other people here, because nobody seems to pay much attention or to take much interest in this measure we are now discussing.

Many people have been disqualified on the basis that they have quit their jobs. Very often when they have written to me explaining why they quit, and I related that reason to officials of the district office, followed by an investigation, they have been reinstated. This is not the exception; it is becoming, in the main, the rule. When they write in and give me an explanation of why they left their employment and I pass that explanation on, they are, more often than not, reinstated.

One thing being said by many ordinary people not involved with unemployment insurance is that an individual can work for a certain length of time, then quit, sit back for the three-weeks' disqualification period and the two-weeks' waiting period, and then draw benefits indefinitely. That is not true. If the conditions I have outlined do exist, these people are on a limited benefit period and do not draw benefits indefinitely. It is not possible to work for eight weeks, then quit and draw benefits indefinitely. Those hon. members here who represent people who believe this is the situation are also those members who supported and voted for the idea that it was possible to bring these people back into the labour force by imposing a disqualification period. I suggest it is to their advantage to draw the eight weeks' benefits, suffering the small disqualification penalty which amounts to no more than a small fine.