

*Unemployment Insurance*

Today, the Government could have used the same method to say it had made a mistake and committed an injustice and that the Cabinet would cancel rules 57 and 58 to reimburse everyone automatically without discriminating against older workers.

Let us see now what we have in the Bill for all the men and women who have lost their jobs. People in the Champlain constituency, in the Trois-Rivières area, in East Montreal, in Abitibi, in Murdochville. Workers in Murdochville who are going to lose their jobs, will withdraw their pension funds, which belong to them, and contrary to what the Hon. Member for Capilano (Mrs. Collins) did, those people have contributed to a registered retirement plan out of their own income. They have used their own money to contribute. But those people will not be eligible for full unemployment insurance benefits. In Murdochville, those people will have to find another job, work for 20 weeks, and then they will be told that if they lose that second job, they will qualify under the system on the basis of what the Hon. Member for Capilano called—as the Hon. Minister for Employment and Immigration says, on the basis of employment income. That time it will work. The first time was no good. Yet what people tend to forget is that the unemployment insurance benefits paid to those recipients will be based on the income from their second job.

Take all the members of the Armed Forces in Canada. All the servicemen. The Government wants to spend \$186 billion to buy submarines to defend ourselves against the invisible enemy. The enemy of Canadians is “Brian Mulroney” and the Conservative Government. That Government is reluctant to pay even its servicemen. It told so to the Armed Forces Personnel in Canada—and I am surprised that Conservative Members from provinces other than Quebec do not stand up to speak for those servicemen. We have former members of the Armed Forces in this House. It is a shame to see them remain silent.

That means that all those who now serve in the Canadian Armed Forces, and who have to quit their job, will not be eligible for full unemployment insurance during the seven, eight or nine months when they look for another job. And if after ten months they find another job and they work until they are 65, they will have paid unemployment insurance, they will have lost a job and they will have been discriminated against by this Government. Those people will never have been eligible for unemployment insurance benefits.

Those are the facts. Later on, we will be proposing amendments. We look forward to the attitude of Conservative Members . . . Some of them said that they were open in their constituencies. When people forced into early retirement went and met them specifically, they all said: You are right. But the time of reckoning has come, and we shall know where we all stand.

Contrary to what the NDP says, I believe it would be wrong to vote against that Bill. It is not a perfect Bill, it is not a Government Bill. The reason we are dealing with this Bill is that the Official Opposition, the Liberals, the people of

Canada have forced it upon the Government. Without the action of the Official Opposition, elderly people would never have been entitled to a refund. It was what the present Employment and Immigration Minister was hoping for, when he took part in the decision to cut unemployment insurance benefits, and we know what the Minister did with the Forget Commission. He wanted \$6 million of the Canadian peoples' money, of the Canadian taxpayers' money. Now, Mr. Minister, whereas you took part in wasting \$6 million, \$4.5 million is all that would be required to bring some fairness to 2,500 people.

Mr. Minister, given that you have wasted all that money, I do hope that you will have a little more social sympathy when you think of those people.

Madam Speaker, what will be the consequences for older workers? There will fall into two groups: those who will be entitled to the benefits of a RRSP and those who will be entitled to the benefits of a Registered Pension Plan. And both will be penalized.

The Minister of Employment and Immigration will be entitled to a pension as a former director of a CEGEP and former teacher. He will get his full pension. When the time comes for him to collect his pension as a former teacher and former director of a CEGEP, he will not be asked: How much income do you get from other sources? Both he and his employer have contributed to his pension fund. Why should the Minister, who will be entitled to payment of a full pension, deprive older workers of their full unemployment insurance benefits while they remain available for work?

Madam Speaker, I would hope that the Minister comes to the realization that as a result of his Bill, some 2,500 people are in the grey area, I mean those older workers who have agreed to an early retirement. Take the case for instance of the Wabasso workers and those from various other companies in Trois-Rivières, Champlain, both Montreal East and Montreal West, as well as Saint-Hyacinthe. Their company has closed down and were laid off because of some provincial piece of legislation, they received separation payment after a notice of so many weeks. The House will remember the case of the Gulf refinery in Montreal East which was closed down by this Conservative Government: Because these workers had accepted separation payments, something like eight, ten or eleven weeks in compensation following the closing of the plant, they could not—and I have obtained notices from the Department, pursuant to section 17: The employment office cannot entertain an application for unemployment insurance benefits as long as the separation payments have not been exhausted.

Mister Minister, I do hope that you know the Unemployment Insurance Act and Regulations. To conclude, Madam Speaker, I wish to remind the Minister that the committee of the House, made up of representatives from the three parties, have recommended to withdraw Sections 57 and 58 and not to discriminate against older workers, both men and women.