

*Employment and Immigration*

recognize that the situation is dramatic and that any attempt on his part to have this bill passed quickly will only worsen the situation and cause more anger, especially on the part of those who will have the feeling that they have not been heard and that no one has listened to them.

The flexibility shown by the minister in trying to amend his bill may be commendable. However, it must be admitted that the act would be harder to implement because it would apply differently in various regions. For example, when a person moves, he may find himself disqualified because the region to which he moves may be subject to stricter criteria under the minister's plan. This will be once again a selective legislation which will require additional civil servants to determine the unemployment rate in each region, in order to make adjustments and figure out how many weeks of employment will be needed to qualify for unemployment insurance; if the unemployment rate is higher, more weeks will be needed, and if it is lower, fewer weeks.

Once again, Mr. Speaker, additional civil servants will be required, more categories, further calculations and also increased costs in order to provide the same service that we are now providing to the unemployed. The Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Cullen) knows how long I have been waiting for this bill. Like many other members, I had the opportunity to deal personally with hundreds of unemployment insurance cases which were submitted by my constituents or other persons. In certain cases, I had occasion to notice that the present act gives rise to blatant injustices. I have often tried to solve the problem of an unemployed constituent and found that the reason for his problem was not necessarily due to the mistake of an official or to the negligence of a claimant but actually to the working of the act. However, in spite of our eagerness to have some changes made in the field of unemployment insurance, we feel nevertheless that it would be a mistake to pass this bill at a time when so many Canadians are dissatisfied.

What I am asking the minister when I suggest that he allow this amendment to be passed, which is designed to defer for 6 months the third reading of this bill, is to try actually to seek a consensus among the population instead of ramming this bill through Parliament against the will of almost everybody. The minister should show his good faith by saying himself: "I am aware that many people oppose this bill", in order to show them that he wants to come up with a measure that will answer the needs and the expectations of these people. Let his bill be shelved for 6 months so that we may listen to the people and inform them at the same time. That is the approach the minister should take now. Mr. Speaker, I have said before and I say it again, it is no time to play politics and to show partisanship regarding this issue, because we feel it is too important for that. We do not want to filibuster.

● (2030)

As I said earlier, there are aspects in this legislation that are quite commendable and acceptable, and I think that, in principle it is a good idea to bring immigration and employment

[Mr. Caouette (Villeneuve).]

under one department. Clearly in our future immigration policy we will have to take into account the employment situation in Canada, and I submit it would be inhuman to invite immigrants to come here if we were not in a position to offer them suitable employment.

Therefore, by creating one department combining immigration and employment it should allow for better planning of our future immigration policy. It will make it easier for us on the basis of the employment-unemployment situation to decide upon the number of immigrants to be accepted. Delaying the establishment of such a department by delaying the legislation is certainly not a pleasant task, but we must consider the whole bill and its implications before rushing it through.

Let us suppose the bill is postponed for six months, Mr. Speaker. This would only leave the government with more time to plan for the establishment of the new department. This would have positive effects, in that it would be possible to identify in advance and avoid errors that usually mar the implementation of any new legislation. So the minister would be well advised to use the six months' delay before bringing back Bill C-27, to prepare and make plans for the integration of the new department. Of course all will depend on how the new department will be created.

It is often said that the road to hell is paved with good intentions. In order to create a more efficient department, a department that is better equipped to coordinate immigration based on the availability of jobs, more than good intentions will be needed. There will have to be first sound management and competent people. Of course, considering the poor performance of the present government in the administration of this country, one is not too sure of the effects of this new legislation as far as administration is concerned. The fact remains, however, that the concept of a better coordination between these interdependent areas is a commendable initiative. And, Mr. Speaker, I do not hesitate to recognize it.

Mr. Speaker, if I support this amendment which calls for a six months' hoist for the consideration of this legislation, it is simply because too many of our fellow citizens find some specific aspects of this bill unacceptable. One thing is clear at present, Mr. Speaker: it is impossible to include in Bill C-27 provisions which are likely to satisfy all interested parties. We shall have to try to determine the root of this problem and find a solution before this bill can be passed. That is why, Mr. Speaker, I urge the government and the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Cullen) in particular, to consider seriously the amendment put forward by the hon. member for Timiskaming. We know this government has absolute majority in the House. We also know that they can, if they wish, ignore the proposals of opposition parties and the requests of Canadians.

I also think that the government should heed this advice which is given not in a partisan spirit but in a spirit of cooperation, with a view to giving the Canadian people some acceptable legislation and also sparing them confrontations and needless frustrations. Mr. Speaker, if I may, I should like to comment certain clauses of the bill. Let us refer to clause