

Unemployment Insurance Act

somebody who goes back into the labour force after two years has got to work for 20 weeks before he can get unemployment insurance, and so on and so forth.

Then, because of the battering they took—I presume that members in the Liberal caucus who come from Atlantic Canada spoke up for the people of Atlantic Canada—they made a little change in that so that if there is unemployment of 11.5 per cent, it would save some of the worst excesses that they propose in their original legislation. There is not a principle among the whole lot opposite. There is not even an isosceles triangle, much less a principle. They should be ashamed to ask this House and to introduce a closure motion in this House for what they are proposing here.

Mr. Nystrom: A lot of squares.

Mr. Crosbie: I just want to mention Newfoundland simply because I come from there.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crosbie: I do not want Mr. Speaker to get the idea, just because we have heavy unemployment, that we are finished in Newfoundland. We are starting to come up from underneath the Liberal penumbra, this burden that has been on our shoulders since 1963.

Mr. Nystrom: That is why they are voting NDP.

Mr. Crosbie: Mr. Speaker, every province has a number of people who want to commit hara-kiri and might vote for the NDP, but I do not think they will find too many in Newfoundland.

The changes suggested by the hon. gentlemen opposite would take \$26 million out of Newfoundland next year, the provisions with respect to new entrants requiring 20 weeks of work instead of, at the present time, ten weeks of work. It would cost the people of Newfoundland \$26 million. It would cost our economy. The reduction in the benefit rate from 66½ per cent to 60 per cent would cost another \$26 million. Had the government gone ahead with its original proposal, we would have lost another \$50 million in connection with the proposals which now no longer apply to us, simply because we have in excess of 11.5 per cent unemployment in Newfoundland.

Imagine suggesting that legislation be passed which will penalize a province if it manages to get its unemployment rate below 11.5 per cent. I mean, that takes genius. That takes Liberal genius to try to give us an incentive in Newfoundland for never decreasing its unemployment rate below 11.5 per cent, because if we do we are going to be cruelly crucified by the legislation passed by hon. gentlemen opposite. That is taking away the old work disincentive. We have got to examine the statistics every month now to make sure that she does not go below 11.5. This is a brilliant, audacious amendment that was brought in by hon. gentlemen opposite because they thought they were going to lose the votes of all their members from Atlantic Canada.

[Mr. Crosbie.]

This is not the government. This is a bunch of survivors trying to cling together in a rough sea somehow to get beyond the shoals of the next election. This is not governing the country. This is not facing the problems of the country. This is the worst kind of mugwumpery. Even the NDP would not stoop so low.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

An hon. Member: Do not count on it.

Mr. Nystrom: A red Tory.

Mr. Crosbie: Having heard the hon. gentleman, perhaps I had better change that. Yes, they would, Mr. Speaker.

In 1977 we received in Newfoundland \$216 million in unemployment insurance. This year the estimate is that it may be \$250 million. We do not want to receive this. We want some job creation. The minister says that he is going to save some money with these amendments which he is going to put into job creation. I was down in my district this Saturday, Fox Harbour, and 23 men working—I am sorry, it was on Monday, not Saturday. There were 23 men working in the pelting rain in a gale of 60 miles an hour putting in the sewage system in Fox harbour because of one of the minister's Canada Works projects. Down there I call it my Canada Works projects, but today I will include the minister. These people want to work. They want work.

Anybody who is willing to go out in a 60-mile an hour wind, in a howling gale and a rain storm, to work for the lowly pittance which they are paid in Canada Works in Newfoundland, where we do not even get as much in Newfoundland as they get on the mainland, wants to work. These people want to work. They are not shirkers. But we have got to give them something to work at.

I have been here now for almost two years. I have been in this House for just over two years. For the whole two years I have been trying to get a synchrolift installed in the federally-owned drydock in St. John's, which is going to create 200 permanent jobs. You know, I cannot get it because of the pusillanimous cowardice on behalf of the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Horner) who does not run his department. He is afraid to cross the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mr. Jamieson), who himself is afraid to cross the workers in the shipyard in Marystown who are complaining that if the workers in the shipyard in St. John's get some assistance for the synchrolift, they might lose some business in the future. Therefore, he has told the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce not to do it.

Now I have got to throw myself at the feet and at the mercy of the President of the Board of Economic Development Ministers (Mr. Andras), "super Andras", to see if we can get the \$8 million for this synchrolift to create 200 permanent jobs. That is what makes this all inconsistent. The 200 jobs could be created with a loan of \$8 million, which the government will get back. Yet I have had to go month after month purely for political reasons trying to get that employment