

*Government Orders**[English]*

**Mr. Blaikie:** I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I hate to sound like an old timer but I was around when we wrote the rules for the question and comment period.

The idea written into the recommendation and accepted by the government was that the question and comment period was first and foremost for members of parties other than the party of the person who had just spoken. It was only in the absence of members of other parties that members of the same party were to be recognized on questions.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** If I go back to the conclusion of the intervention by the hon. member for Lévis, at the beginning of question and comment period both the member for Lotbinière and the member for Winnipeg Transcona rose at the same time.

I gave the floor to the hon. member for Winnipeg Transcona, and following the reply of the member I gave the floor to the hon. member for Lotbinière.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Landry:** Mr. Speaker, as I was getting ready to speak, I listened carefully to what the member for Lévis said about Bill C-17. I would like to ask him a question. Did he or his party do something about Bill C-17 with the government? Did they try to find a solution to this problem?

Let us make no secret about it, some people, Canadians and Quebecers, will be hurt by this law. Let us not forget that even those who are working today do not know if they will be out of a job tomorrow.

It is very important and I would like the member for Lévis to tell us if the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development, on which he sits, offered a concrete solution to this problem.

● (1540)

My second question is: How will we announce these cuts to Canadians? Will the member invite all Canadians and Quebecers to rally against this law? What does he intend to do?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** The hon. member for Lotbinière is acquiring some experience, as are all his colleagues from both sides of the House. Considering the short time that we have left, I hope that the hon. member for Lévis will be able to answer both questions.

**Mr. Dubé:** Mr. Speaker, what have we done and what do we intend to do? Well, in the Committee on Human Resources Development, of course, this project was not discussed as such, but the administration of the unemployment insurance fund was.

We met the Minister of Human Resources Development and asked him some questions. We also approached officials who are

implementing this system. I wish to tell those who are listening to us that the bill was tabled by the finance minister, so it was considered in the committee of finance. And the Official Opposition invited witnesses from all parts of the country to give their opinions and would have liked to hear other people, because many wanted to be heard.

What can we do to stir up public opinion? I think that it is not the role of a member of Parliament as such to do that. Anyway, that will not be necessary, since on May 1st, on Workers' Day, and the days that followed, you will recall that there were major demonstrations throughout Canada, and particularly in Quebec. And there are many people within organizations, action groups on unemployment and community groups who are concerned and asking for information. Our group of members of Parliament, of course, is trying to provide all the information available on that issue. Several members have taken the initiative to get together once a month, in public meetings, with their constituents. From the contacts that I had with my colleagues, this issue is the most often raised.

*[English]*

**Hon. David Anderson (Minister of National Revenue):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise today to speak in the House about the government's commitment to an unemployment insurance program that provides adequate and fair protection for Canadians who have lost their jobs and are seeking work.

*[Translation]*

We are living in unusual times with many upheavals to our economic and social systems. This is not a time when we can be complacent. That is why this government is committed to ensuring that our social security system is brought up-to-date so that it can meet the needs of Canadians now and in the future.

The unemployment insurance program is an integral part of this system. It will be a key element in our reform of the social safety net and in the development of an economic policy that will guide Canadians into the 21st century.

*[English]*

In introducing these changes to the unemployment insurance program we have carefully weighed the needs of business, of the unemployed and of working Canadians. We wanted a program that would create and protect jobs but also one that would ensure adequate resources for low income families with dependants.

Let me for a moment examine these changes. Payroll taxes such as unemployment insurance premiums play an important role in job creation and, conversely, in discouraging the creation of new jobs. When businesses know that payroll taxes are going up they cannot stabilize their costs. Naturally they have concerns about future profitability. They may not be able to create new jobs or even sustain the jobs that already exist.