

I have talked off the record to officials in the unemployment insurance office in my constituency and have noted some very positive suggestions on their part. They are the people who deal with the legislation and the regulations on a day to day basis, and they have a lot of good ideas. I have also talked to people in the labour movement and others who have served on boards of referees. They, too, know where improvements can be made in the regulations and in the system as a whole.

**Mr. Blackburn:** But they are afraid to talk.

**Mr. Symes:** As my hon. friend from Brant (Mr. Blackburn) says, these people are often afraid to make suggestions for fear they may be interpreted by those in the higher echelons as speaking in criticism of the way the system works. Therefore, it seems to me that if we had these advisory councils functioning in the proper way, this would provide the opportunity to those not directly involved with the system to relay their points of view to the Unemployment Insurance Commission. Hopefully, in this way we could iron out some of the difficulties and have the legislation applied in such a way that it did not discriminate against or penalize certain people. Surely, the aim of any piece of legislation is not to penalize or hinder in undue fashion those who benefit from the legislation but, rather, to expedite such benefits. Accepting these two amendments would be a positive step in that direction.

I should like the minister to tell the House, either at this point or later on in the debate, how the personnel of these advisory committees are to be appointed. My fear is that very often representation to various committees appointed by the government consists of—

**Mr. Rodriguez:** Liberal flunkies.

**Mr. Symes:** My hon. friend from Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) says "Liberal flunkies", but I will be a little more charitable and say that often these appointees are not as representative as one might hope. I should like to know who actually appoints representatives to these advisory councils, and what the criteria are. Are they people from interested groups in the community who have something to do with unemployment insurance, such as employers or people from labour unions, or are they people who at one time worked within the bureaucracy but are now retired? Are these advisory committees representative, or are they—dare I use the word—partisan appointments?

**Mr. Blackburn:** Go ahead and dare.

**Mr. Symes:** Do they have some kind of expertise in dealing with unemployment insurance or employment generally? I would hope so. I would be very interested to know what is the selection process. Perhaps we should think of future improvements along that line.

In summary, Mr. Speaker, I agree with the main thrust of these two motions. They provide for openness in the functioning of government, and also for some input into the operation of government. I think this openness and input could be increased even further if there were a broader basis for select-

### *Employment and Immigration*

ing people appointed to these advisory committees. I am not by nature a suspicious person, but judging from the kind of Liberal appointments made in the past I fear that patronage is moving in in regard to this kind of appointment as well. Perhaps the minister would enlighten the House on the actual selection process.

**Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Manpower and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, having listened very carefully to the comments on motions Nos. 2 and 3, may I at the outset remind the House that this is an advisory council to the minister which we are talking about. It is a council which gives advice and from which advice will be sought by the minister. As I said in committee when I went through the bill, having taken on this particular portfolio I asked the same questions hon. members might ask. I ask whether we really need a council, whether it is effective, whether it has a role to play, and I am satisfied in my own mind that the answer is yes. It is for this reason that this provision is still in the bill. I wanted it to be a committee that had a real role to play.

● (1240)

I wanted the committee to have access to the minister and access to such information as is available from the department, given the restriction that the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) would be concerned about, namely, that there are areas here where individual human rights must be protected, and the information may be very sensitive to some individuals in the department.

If all this information were made available to the advisory council and then became public, the fact that we would have to table all reports would have an inhibiting effect on the kinds of information that would be made available from the department. I would be concerned about tabling all reports. However, as I indicated in the committee, I have read many of the reports in the past and have found that a large majority of them—I believe the chairmen of both councils would concede that this is so—contain nothing sensitive or secretive in them. It would be my policy and my role to table a large percentage of the reports that are made available to me. But when I receive information I do not want a watered-down version of what the council thinks, because the council might be concerned that the information will be automatically made public. I want hard information, I want information that is going to be useful to the department and to the individual whom we are trying to serve. It is for that reason, and that reason alone, that I am reluctant to accept motion No. 2 put forward by the hon. member for Hamilton West.

I have no concern about the second motion. I will not oppose it, and the government is prepared to accept it. However, I might say that I think it is somewhat redundant. The hon. member himself, in introducing his motion, indicated that he knows the council meets more than once a year and he is satisfied that the council keeps minutes. So I have no concern with that, other than I feel it might very well be redundant. The hon. member used some poetic licence in saying that I was "pleased" to accept the motion in committee. That is a loose