

from the department who are available to go in and explain any sections of the bill that they are not familiar with. Having read Senator MacEachen's speech I can tell you he did not read the bill. He did not know what it was all about. It was a disjointed effort on his part. His comments were a discredit to himself and to the Senate.

I hope that the Senate will reconsider the actions that are being contemplated and that senators will pass this bill before we rise for Christmas.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Beauséjour):** Madam Speaker, I find it very hard to accept what was said by the hon. member who just finished his speech, and I am referring to his comment about treating Bill C-21 in a cynical, back-handed way.

What we are trying to do today is make the government understand that in January, we might have a situation where families might be in great difficulty. There might not be any money to pay the rent or heating bills or food bills.

When he says there is no reason for such measures, I think we should consider the normal parliamentary process. As soon as the House of Commons has finished consideration of the bill, it must be referred to the Senate for further consideration. We are told it is customary, that they have to do this. They have every right to do so, and if they do, it would take us practically up to February, although it might take longer.

This measure would at least have the effect of alleviating the immediate needs of families caught in a very difficult situation.

The hon. member also said the committee had heard witnesses and mentioned all these people representing chambers of commerce and local groups. However, one group was denied access to the committee. I attended hearings in Moncton, where two ministers of the province of New Brunswick would have liked to address their concerns to the committee. At the time, the committee decided against hearing them.

I wonder why the committee refused to listen to these people. When the Senate holds its hearings, perhaps these people could come and explain their position, so that we can find out how the bill will affect people in the

various provinces. I think the Senate should have enough time to hear these witnesses.

Is the hon. member saying we should not listen to these people, that they should not be given a chance to speak?

[*English*]

**Mr. Kempling:** Madam Speaker, when we had an organizational meeting of the legislative committee dealing with Bill C-21 we had requests from Liberal members of Parliament who wanted to appear as witnesses before the committee. We had other requests of a similar nature from some of the provinces.

The member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce, the member from Saskatoon, myself and others sat down and agreed that we should not hear from politicians, that provincial ministers have direct access to the Minister of Employment and Immigration and on commissions. They have other ways of communicating. It is not a normal practice. I would like him to tell me of another legislative committee in this country that has had provincial ministers appear before it. That is not the normal way in which they communicate.

• (1610)

As far as the witnesses are concerned, when we had our organizational meeting the member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce came before us and said: "We don't want to begin any hearings before September 4th", or perhaps it was the fifth, whatever it was, the first week of that month. That was his comment to us. We said: "Fine, that is all right".

He then said that we should have 16 witnesses a day and give them each 30 minutes. We agreed to that.

He then told us in which cities he thought we should have our hearings. We agreed with that, right across the country.

The member should go back and ask him, do not ask me. We went right along with everything that he said. In fact, I can tell you for sure that there were only two cities where we heard the full complement of witnesses. Those cities were Toronto and Vancouver. Even in Montreal, his own city, we did not hear the full complement of 16 witnesses.

We were going to go to the Northwest Territories and to the Yukon, but we did not have enough interest for us