

Unemployment Insurance Act

An hon. Member: That he should take a walk.

Mr. McGrath: We have a term for it in Newfoundland. It is not parliamentary so I will not use it, but it has to do with the fish business. It is a part of the fish that has little or no value; it is useless. It could be used maybe for cat food as a protein supplement. I read the speech of the hon. member for Hochelaga and found that he also spoke against the bill. He said:

It is obvious that the government must cut expenses one way or another but, Mr. Speaker, I would not like to penalize people who are unemployed against their will and who have no other choice.

That could have been the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) speaking, it could have been me or any other member of the House, but, significantly, it was a supporter of the government. As we come to divisions on this bill and to amendments which address themselves to the very objections the hon. member raised, we will be very carefully watching the hon. member for Hochelaga vote on this bill.

I say to my good friends behind me who are making interjections that they do not have to worry about this side of the House. We have made it very clear that we intend to vote against this bill since it is now obvious that the government has no intention of dealing with our amendments. The position was put forward, and it has been a consistent one, by my colleague, the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Clarke), that if the government had accepted our amendments, then obviously we would have supported the bill. Now we know there is going to be closure and we may not even get to our amendments. Therefore, of course, we have no choice. I say to the hon. member for Nickel Belt and the hon. member from Toronto who is behind him, the hon. member for "Broadbent"—

● (1612)

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. McGrath: I say to the hon. member for Broadview (Mr. Rae)—"Broadbent" was close enough anyway—that he will have no doubt at all just exactly what our position is on this bill. We intend to make it very clear as the debate progresses. I am concerned that, as a consequence of what the minister has done, we may not get to some of the important amendments, including the amendment that stands in the name of my colleague the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra, and the amendment that stands in the name of my colleague the hon. member for York-Scarborough (Mr. McCrossan). Indeed, it is a fairly good bet we will not get to those amendments.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): We will have to vote on them.

Mr. McGrath: We will have to vote on them certainly, but we will not have the opportunity of debating them and we will not have the opportunity of dealing with the inequities of this bill which were so dramatically, honestly and sincerely presented to the House last night by the hon. member for South Western Nova, the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport and the hon. member for Hochelaga.

This bill is iniquitous. It is a bad bill, an unjust bill and an unfair bill. It is a bad bill, Mr. Speaker, and it is bad

[Mr. McGrath.]

legislation. This is a bill with which I find very few people agree. Okay, so the government are going to practice restraint; but are they going to practice restraint at the expense of the hon. member for Hochelaga and the hon. member for South Western Nova? I see the hon. member for Saint John Albert who is going to be most unjustly affected by this bill, yet all we ever get from him is his furious points of order. He never makes a positive contribution in this House.

Mr. Landers: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I should like to inform the House that the name of my riding changed about 15 years ago. Perhaps the hon. member's ideas about the riding are the same as they were when the riding had that name. The name of the riding is Saint John-Lancaster, not Saint John Albert.

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, that is consistent with the contributions the hon. member has made in this House since he has been here. I accept the correction. It is Saint John-Lancaster, and the hon. member had better learn to enjoy it because he does not have much longer to stand in this place and interrupt as the hon. member for Saint John-Lancaster (Mr. Landers); come the next election he will be back doing whatever it was he was doing before he came here.

Perhaps there is still an outside chance, a remote possibility, that the hon. member for Saint John-Lancaster may screw up his courage, stand in his place in this House and follow the good example set by the hon. member for South Western Nova and the hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Transport, and speak out against this bill. He knows what it is going to do to his province. He knows what it is going to do to the unemployed people in his city. He knows that Saint John-Lancaster has one of the highest rates of urban unemployment anywhere in the country. He knows the 11.5 per cent triggering clause is going to exempt his area, and the people of Saint John are going to ask why they should be treated any different from the people on the north shore of New Brunswick. Why should the people on the north shore of New Brunswick have privileges in terms of qualifying for unemployment insurance which are denied those people in Saint John where the unemployment rate is 11 per cent? Let the hon. member for Saint John-Lancaster explain that to his people.

We know the situation, and if we did not know it we heard the evidence given by the province. Indeed, we heard the proposal placed before the parliamentary committee by the province of New Brunswick. It was co-authored by the province of British Columbia and presented jointly by the provinces of New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Ontario. We know how they felt about the bill. I see the hon. member from the north shore of New Brunswick.

Mr. Breau: From Gloucester.

Mr. McGrath: We have great admiration for him and I know he is going to say the same thing in the House that he says outside the House, and that is that this bill is an unfair, unjust and inequitable bill. I am awaiting the opportunity of listening to him because he always speaks eloquently, sincerely