

that voluntary quitters should have greater penalties imposed on them than individuals who are laid off work.

When we brought in our last bill, we put in an amendment with a double disqualification from three to six weeks. Experience since that time has shown that some further action may well be called for. I doubt, however, that the Conservative approach, particularly the doubling of the penalty from six to 12 weeks, is the preferred approach. It is not that we did not look at it, but that we did not think it would do what they and we wanted it to do. It certainly needs more study than the half hour about which the hon. member for Gloucester (Mr. Breau) spoke today when apparently the Conservatives were considering their two-tier approach, whatever that approach may be—because although it is a two-tier approach, it has about 16 different applications depending on how you define dependants, and so on.

I listened to the Leader of the Opposition yesterday and I wondered if he really knows how parliament works. Certainly he showed no indication that he had any idea whatsoever. There was a time when you went out and did carolling at Christmas because you enjoyed it and it entertained your neighbours. We find the Conservatives going out carolling, but they always make certain they have a cameraman along to make sure they capture this effort. Even at Christmas they made sure of that.

I mention that primarily to show that the approach on this side is different. Legitimate and honest concerns have been expressed to me by the hon. member for South Western Nova (Miss Campbell), the hon. member for Compton (Mr. Tessier), and the hon. member for Rivière-du-Loup-Témiscouata (Mr. Gendron). They raised their concerns personally with me, they raised them in caucus, they raised them with my colleague and they raised them in the House. If we had made any changes or suggested that we could accommodate them, the opposition parties would have taken all the credit. Not one of the opposition members raised this as a particular issue. All of the complaints about the benefit rates and how these particular lines work against the benefits of people in their ridings were raised on this side. So we looked at the issue.

The first suggestion made to me by the hon. member for South Western Nova was to the effect that the minister should have the discretion to draw the lines so that they would be equal. One can imagine what kind of response that would have had from the opposition. We found the possibility of doing that in the legislation under a provision which would authorize a group—it will be a competent group composed of the representatives of the commission and of the department, Statistics Canada and outside consultants—to investigate complaints about the drawing of boundary lines for the specific areas where complaints are being put forward and to make recommendations on options for improving the situation. I could have done that in caucus. I could have let them make their complaints, I could have made that change and announced it. There is no gagging on this side. I could have said: "Okay, we will deal with that in caucus and I will make an announcement". Nobody was gagged. Everybody who had a comment to

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make, critical or not, got up and made his pitch. I listened and we made changes to accommodate their concerns. That is the way we make changes in this House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Cullen: To my surprise—perhaps I should not say that I am surprised because I have never been one of those who thought that the Senate was ahead of this chamber, although it is certainly ahead of the opposition; but in this case they have been—the Senators recognized that we were coming up against the Christmas deadline, so they discussed this bill simultaneously with us. They have had our officials going over this bill clause by clause and over the philosophy of the legislation. Now they are prepared to deal with this piece of legislation. They have given it a tremendous amount of study. I have appeared before them myself in committee and, as I said, my officials have also done so.

The government's proposals in Bill C-14 are designed to deal with abuse and will not come to grips with this problem. That is the charge made by the opposition. The objectives of the amendments, as I have said during second reading, are to reduce work disincentives and to encourage workers to establish a more suitable work pattern. I continue to believe the amendments with respect to new entrants, re-entrants and repeaters in particular will contribute to the achievement of these objectives.

One of the submissions made at the first ministers' conference—I said this, or a discussion paper said this and I repeated it—stated:

In the longer run, a conceptual review of the UI program, in the context of an evolving social security system is imperative, so that the aspect of "meeting needs" as distinct from the purer "insurance" aspect can be clarified.

I indicated to my provincial colleagues that we would prepare a paper on this subject and enter into full and comprehensive discussion with representatives of provinces and the private sector so that collectively we can help ensure that we have the best UI program to meet the challenges of the 1980s. That is a commitment I made to my provincial colleagues, and most assuredly that is a commitment I make to the House at this time.

I do not think I have to belabour the changes that were made. We did not use blunt instruments. Probably we could have found some simple way of doing this. We decided we should tax back, for example. Some people feel that if individuals receive \$30,000 or \$35,000 a year, they do not need unemployment insurance. We moved away from the insurance principle, and we are being criticized for doing that. The two-tier approach appears neither to adhere to insurance principles nor to income transfers. It does not take into account the income of individuals. If it is to be an income transfer, surely we should deal with the amount of money being earned by that individual. The two-tier system would be a disaster; it is not that I was being obstinate and could not accept it. It does not make good sense to bring in legislation at this time which does not adhere to insurance principles or income transfers.