

*Employment and Immigration*

**Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming):** Mr. Speaker, I would think that the members of the government are cutting it pretty thin. In another couple of minutes we would have adjourned for want of a quorum, but I would not have wanted that to happen.

**Some hon. Members:** No, no!

**Mr. Peters:** An adjournment would eliminate my opportunity for making a plea to the government to dispose of this bill by withdrawing it. It has been our contention in third reading debate, as it has been our contention all along, that the reason this bill was introduced at all was because we have an unacceptable amount of unemployment. Our unemployment is of a cyclical nature, and there does not seem to be any end to the cycle of unemployment. There has been no upturn to date in our economy, therefore it has been increasingly difficult to pay the necessary unemployment benefits. The easiest solution would be to cut down on the number of people who can draw benefits under the unemployment insurance scheme, but that is no substitute for employment.

Some of the unemployment we are suffering today is the kind that is going to cause considerable difficulty in the outlying areas of the country, in the areas which are dependent on one industry. There is difficulty in the service industry where employment often is of a short duration and is difficult to come by. This is not true in terms of full employment periods, but it is true in those periods when employment is more difficult to come by. We are also very concerned about the fact that much of this cyclical unemployment takes place with those between the ages of 15 and 25. If members are unaware of how serious this is, they may, as I have done in the last few days, get in touch with Manpower. It is very surprising to see the calibre of people who go to our Manpower offices. Some of them have degrees, but they have been unable to obtain employment.

For these reasons this bill should be reconsidered. It should be reconsidered not only in light of eliminating some of the discretionary clauses in the bill, namely, the extension in the period when a person must work before qualifying for any benefits. It should be reviewed as well in light of finding a way to provide employment for the 1½ million people who are now looking for employment.

We cannot support the bill in its present form. We are insistent that reconsideration be given to the establishment in Canada of an employment factor rather than unemployment insurance, and point out the failure of this bill to do this. Therefore I move, seconded by the hon. member for Brant (Mr. Blackburn):

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "that" and by substituting therefor the following words:

"Bill C-27 be not read a third time, but that it be read a third time this day six months hence."

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** The question is now on the amendment. Is the House ready for the question?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Armand Caouette (Villeneuve):** Mr. Speaker, let me first congratulate the hon. member for Témiscaming (Mr. Peters) who put forward the amendment proposing to postpone third reading of this bill for six months. As far as I am concerned, there are several proposals in the bill which are desirable and acceptable. I do not want to be negative about it, alleging that there is nothing good in Bill C-27. However, we must admit that this bill more than any other piece of legislation on the order paper has prompted reactions from many groups of citizens who are against one or several of its provisions.

● (2020)

Mr. Speaker, when a bill is a cause of division and hate in a country, in my opinion, it is only logical to postpone its implementation and to listen to those who are not satisfied with it. Later on it can be passed with amendments that make it more acceptable, with the knowledge that Canadians do not feel that they have been had, to use a colloquialism. This is why, Mr. Speaker, I believe that the amendment suggested today by the hon. member for Timiskaming is sound and warrants our reflecting on all the problems that this bill can cause. I also believe that the government would be well-advised to listen to this suggestion and to let things quiet down for a while before implementing this bill about which, as I said earlier, so many Canadians are deeply divided.

It is a secret for no one, Mr. Speaker, that nobody agrees on the period required to qualify for unemployment insurance. The minister himself recognized the explosive nature of this issue when he jumped the gun and suggested an amendment to the bill so as to replace the original requirement of twelve weeks of employment by a more streamlined and more complex provision allowing the number of weeks to vary from one region to another according to the local unemployment rate. The minister has tried to have it both ways. He has tried to please everyone, but let us face it, his bill pleases almost no one. As my colleague from Kamouraska (Mr. Dionne) and my colleague from Timiskaming said so well earlier, the people mainly affected by this bill are those who can work only a few weeks at a job, which forces their employers to hire them for a set period.

Mr. Speaker, this issue is important and I believe that all members must recognize that bill C-27 is a source of dissension among the citizens of our country. On the one hand, we have individuals who need the security provided by the unemployment insurance and groups representing the poor, and on the other hand, we have the business people who are sufficiently well off not to need unemployment insurance. The first group demands of course that the qualifying period remains at eight weeks while the other group would like it to be increased to at least twelve weeks.

Mr. Speaker, how can we reconcile these two points of view? It is certainly difficult and it is easy to understand the failure of the minister in this regard. Anyone else would probably not have done better, but the minister should be man enough to