

Unemployment Insurance Act

eight items before No. 32. I think we should have an explanation why we are passing them over. I understand why in a couple of cases, but with regard to item No. 29, for example, we should either debate it or take it off the order paper; I see no reason at all for leaving it there. If the hon. member is not prepared to proceed with the item, I suggest that it be dropped.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): It looks as though an agreement has been reached not to drop these items, but perhaps this rule could be looked at again, if there is agreement, the next time.

Mr. Herbert: There is no unanimous agreement to leave item No. 29 on the order paper.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Madam Speaker, I do not take umbrage at the suggestion being made by the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert) that these agreements be looked at. But I suggest as strongly as I can that it is unfair to pick out one of seven which are being passed over and say that it must be dropped, especially when its sponsor is not here. If we are to drop any ahead of No. 32, let us drop all seven. If we are to let some stand, let us let all seven stand. I suggest the hon. member for Vaudreuil has a good point. He should press it in the appropriate place, through the appropriate channels. But I make the point that if we let six out of seven notices of motion stand, we should do the same for all seven.

● (1700)

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): I thank the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles).

[Translation]

But I would like to remind the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert) that Standing Order 19 is very clear on this, and I quote:

Questions put by members and notices of motions, not taken up when called may (upon the request of the government) be allowed to stand and retain their precedence; otherwise they will disappear from the Order Paper. They may, however, be renewed.

[English]

Is it agreed that they shall stand for the time being?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' MOTIONS

[English]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT

SUGGESTED REVISION TO REMOVE PROVISIONS BASED UPON PRINCIPLE OF SOCIAL WELFARE

Mr. William Knowles (Norfolk-Haldimand) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider revising the Unemployment Insurance Act to remove those provisions which discourage the incentive to work and, as well, those provisions which are based upon the principle of social welfare and not upon the principle of social insurance.

[Mr. Herbert.]

He said: Madam Speaker, I was advised by the parliamentary secretary to the government House leader that motion No. 32 standing in my name would be called today. That is why I am ready to speak. I understand it was agreed that my motion would be called. The House is aware of my motion and I will not read it. I have discussed this matter in the House on previous occasions. My interventions have not resulted in changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act or to the regulations, and I am here again to argue my case for the removal of disincentives which apply to certain people who have dealings with the Unemployment Insurance Commission in the area I represent.

I will focus my remarks on what happens with regard to seasonal agricultural workers in my area particularly, although the same holds true for many other areas of the country. Seasonal agricultural workers are employed in harvesting the tobacco crop in my area, as well as in harvesting apples, small fruits and market garden crops. Such harvesting utilizes a great deal of intensive hand labour. Despite our best efforts at mechanization, we have not been able to supplant the human hand in harvesting. Consequently, there is a heavy demand for short-term workers.

There are several main sources from which we can obtain such short-term labour. First, of course, our Canadian workers make up the great bulk of these harvest workers. Usually they are local or neighbourhood people who at harvest time give up their household duties and work in the fields. Or they might be students at school; they leave the classroom or the home and help the local farmer harvest his crop. Students do not only come from nearby areas; they come from all across Canada: the Manpower people bring them in to help in this operation.

As well, we employ migrant workers, the least dependable of all. Usually they are people least able to find a job. They go to Manpower offices and try to find employment, but find it difficult to make a living for themselves and hold on to a job. Often they are drifters, given to drunkenness or to drug use and they create all sorts of problems. The third category is offshore labor. I am referring, of course, to the European university student exchange program and to foreign workers who come to this country to work. My remarks in the main do not concern them.

Specifically, I want to talk about the effect of the Unemployment Insurance Act on seasonal agricultural workers. I am not alone in my opinion. Others hold views similar to mine in connection with unemployment insurance problems. Allow me to refer to page 4857 of *Hansard* for June 18, 1973. The House on that day was debating the private member's motion standing in my name, dealing with the subject matter dealt with by the present motion. I had been talking about the defects of the unemployment insurance system and read into the record part of a brief prepared by members of the Norfolk county council. The brief dealt with unemployment insurance and with the difficulty of obtaining workers, and said in part:

—there are serious faults with the system. The first is the short qualifying period of eight weeks. In our interviews we found time after time that workers would only put in eight weeks of labour at any one place, to satisfy the qualification required by the Unemployment Insurance Act, after which they seem to have no difficulty in obtaining their unemployment insurance allotments.