

Employment and Immigration

there is one thing that we on this side will not accept, and that is any ramrodding of bills.

So there is the difficulty, Mr. Speaker. We do not know what the amendments are all about. We see them all in package form this morning on the order paper. It was only because we had some extra staff, for which we extend some little thanks to the government, that we could put these people to work for us and ask them to find out what the NDP and the Social Credit party were doing. We had some idea of what the government was doing, thank goodness, or we would have been in an awful state this morning. I want to put this matter on the record because I feel it is extremely important. Your Honour is embarrassed—I can say that on your behalf—because we are now faced with 33 amendments.

Mr. MacFarlane: He does not look embarrassed.

Mr. Alexander: As I was saying, Mr. Speaker, you are embarrassed. Never mind what the dumb-dumbs on the other side say; they have no idea what this bill is all about. They just like to put a few words in because it is almost time to go home for the summer recess so they can start mending their own fences. As I was saying, there are 33 amendments placed before the House, if I am not mistaken, by the combined parties, together with six or seven recommendations under Standing Order 75(6) since the government wants to spend money. Having said that, my amendment No. 1 is extremely simple.

Mr. MacFarlane: Now you are embarrassed.

Mr. Alexander: Let me read it so that my hon. friend from Hamilton Mountain (Mr. MacFarlane), who is government whip and a member of parliament temporarily, will understand what is going on around here. My amendment is in line with the new Unemployment Insurance Act which indicates the powers, duties and functions of the minister which are extended to include matters over which the parliament of Canada has jurisdiction, not by law assigned to any other department, branch or agency of the government of Canada relating to the development and utilization of labour market resources in Canada, employment services, unemployment insurance and immigration.

Under clause 109 of the new Immigration Act, which is Bill C-24, the minister introduces a new procedure whereby he is prepared to consult with the provinces on immigration. I have questioned the minister and written to all the provincial labour ministers involved, and all I have done is try to bring some credibility to the measure in terms of government plans in regard to unemployment insurance and manpower. My amendment adds two clauses, the first of which is:

(3) the minister shall consult with the provinces respecting the measures to be undertaken to facilitate the formulation, co-ordination and implementation of unemployment insurance and manpower policies and programs.

The second provides:

(4) the minister, with the approval of the governor in council may enter into an agreement with any province or group of provinces for the purpose of

[Mr. Alexander.]

facilitating the formulation, co-ordination and implementation of unemployment insurance and manpower policies and programs.

If the minister had any gumption he would say yes, the hon. member for Hamilton West has a point. The point that I am making is that this party will not accept any approach that brings about confrontation with the provinces. We want a policy of consultation and co-operation; that is the essence of the matter. The minister said in committee that that is what we have now. I want to tell him that the letters which have been written and the replies received indicate there is something to be desired in the approach taken by the federal government to the provinces. Consultation is limited, if it exists at all. There is limited co-operation. This is why we have a terrible problem in regard to national unity at the present time. There has been no concrete evidence of any meaningful consultation or co-operation with the provinces. As a result of the tunnel-vision of this government, one province has now elected a separatist government.

Your Honour may think this amendment goes beyond the scope of this bill, but if Your Honour reads the bill in its entirety, as I know you have, it speaks of consultation with the provinces by implication. The minister even adopted a flexible approach to unemployment insurance benefits because we were concerned about the disparities which exist between the various regions of this country. But we are sick and tired of the approach taken by the government which leads to confrontation rather than consultation and co-operation.

The minister will say that we already have consultation, Mr. Speaker, but his consultation goes something like this: there will be option one, option two and option three. The minister will say, "We are going to support option one. What do you think?" I say that is not consultation or co-operation; it is blackmail. The government tells the provinces what it is going to do, that of the three options, option one is the most feasible, viable and acceptable; but given the fact that the provinces are part of this great confederation, they are occasionally given the opportunity to have a little chat with the government. He has never given them any credit whatsoever in terms of bringing the provinces into the consultative process.

● (1120)

In short, all I am doing is putting in writing the legislative authority, something which the minister is doing right now. The amendment is not taking away anything. It says that he shall consult. If one wanted to be really smart around here, one could say that to consult means very little. But at least it is a step in the right direction. They are consulting now. Also, they are entering into agreements with the provinces regarding unemployment insurance and manpower.

Let me explain what I put in this amendment. Under clause 41, the government is bringing in three different processes entitled developmental use of unemployment insurance fund, job training, job creation and work sharing. The provinces are extremely concerned that the government will bring in these ad hoc approaches to unemployment without thorough and reasonable consultation with them. I am registering their