

Mr. Lavoie: Mr. Speaker, I do not know if the number you mention corresponds to the order in which the motions are to be discussed. The motion that I proposed and that I gave to the clerk concerns clause 14 of Bill C-14. Obviously, it relates strictly to that. If it is not possible to discuss these amendments today, and if it is possible tomorrow or the day after, I will simply discuss them at that time, Mr. Speaker. That is all I wanted to know.

Mr. Speaker: It must be clarified that there are two points to be considered in motion No. 27 from the hon. member for Hochelaga (Mr. Lavoie). I indicated that we would discuss the procedural matter tomorrow at three o'clock. Then, after that, we will start the discussion on the substance after other discussions.

[*English*]

I would therefore propose at this stage to proceed with the discussion on motion No. 1 in the name of the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Leggatt).

Mr. John Rodriguez (Nickel Belt) (for Mr. Leggatt) moved:

That Bill C-14, to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1971, be amended by deleting clause 1.

He said: Mr. Speaker, we have proposed this amendment to delete clause 1. From the moment the minister announced on September 1, 1978, that he intended to tighten up the Unemployment Insurance Act and sketchily outlined the areas in which he was going to move, this party went on record as saying the minister was distracting attention away from the real issue that is evident in this country, and that unemployment insurance was not unemployment insurance but employment insurance. That is the issue.

I recall turning on the television set on September 1 to watch the national news. There was the minister in full living colour telling how he was going to tighten up the Unemployment Insurance Act. Then came the Conservative party spokesperson, the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Clarke), on the television set telling us that this bill moves in the right direction but does not go far enough. He talked about moving to the right with the Unemployment Insurance Act and put the Conservatives on record in what they want to do, that is, move beyond what the minister announced on September 1.

When we examined the bill that the minister brought down, and particularly that section of the act it proposed to amend, we concluded that this was a vicious and discriminatory bill. We pointed out the clauses which we feel are discriminatory and those which are vicious. We consistently tried to pin the minister down on the rationale behind the bill. He told us it was the government's perspective that the public thinks people are ripping off unemployment insurance. The minister was looking for a scapegoat in order to regain popular public support for the government and hit on the people who are collecting unemployment insurance as the people who are ripping off the system.

Unemployment Insurance Act

To set the stage, the minister placed \$150,000 worth of advertisements across the country which say, in effect, that such and such a person who is collecting unemployment insurance has his hand in the taxpayers' pockets. He created an atmosphere in which those people who are working feel that those who are collecting unemployment insurance are indeed sticking their hands in the workers' pockets.

The minister then conducted a survey to find out if the advertisements were effective, and as you might expect the results showed the public perception to be that those who were collecting unemployment insurance were doing so illegally and were rip-off artists.

This party has never avoided saying that the unemployment insurance program suffers from a percentage of rip-off. It is no greater than the percentage of doctors who rip off the medical insurance program, however, and no greater than the percentage of lawyers who rip off legal aid schemes. It is simply comparable to any other social program in our society.

The minister brought in Bill C-14 on the basis of perceptions gleaned from a survey probably taken in areas where the advertisements had been placed in some density. Apart from the Conservatives, who supports the minister in these conclusions? Mr. Speaker, you will shortly see one of the greatest performances ever seen without a stage. You will see the Conservative party in the House swallow itself.

● (1532)

Some hon. Members: Explain.

Mr. Rodriguez: The hon. member for St. John's East (Mr. McGrath) is smiling at me. I hope he will continue to smile as they rise to his eyeballs.

Who supports the minister in this attack on the unemployed other than the Conservative party? No one else but the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. They came before the committee which was studying this bill. By the way, only nine witnesses were heard on this bill. The manufacturers appeared before the committee to support the moves the minister was making in the bill. They urged the minister to go even further on some amendments. Who appeared for the Canadian Manufacturers' Association to give witness that night but the vice-president of the International Nickel Company, Frank Burnett. How Inco fits into the CMA is completely beyond me. Moreover, I do not know what Inco has done lately to create employment in this country. It seems to me they have helped to put people on the very unemployment insurance program which they came before the Commons committee to tell members of parliament to tighten up.

What was their argument for supporting the bill? I want to quote from the brief they presented in which they said:

Because of the extent of unemployment among young people and women, we suspect that over 50 per cent of claimants come from households and families where there is more than one wage earner.

They are saying that overwhelmingly people on unemployment insurance do not need it because they can pool the family