

Unemployment Insurance Act

seasonal economies, such as fisheries, peat moss, tourism and other seasonal industries. The people of those areas are subjected to seasonally affected economies. The minister indicated that this was the best measure in order to deal with the problem.

He excluded all economic zones with unemployment rates of 11.5 per cent or higher, which is a very good thing. Of course there are problems, and the minister will continue to look at them. The regions were drawn up by order in council, and therefore they can be changed by order in council. The minister does not want to put himself in the position of making a decision alone. The hon. member for Carleton-Charlotte (Mr. McCain) and other Conservative members do not have to worry. Whenever the government passes an order in council, it does not apply only to Quebec; it applies across the country.

Dealing with the question of allocation of time, hon. members of the Tory party said allocation of time was brought in to gag or muzzle us on this side of the House. I am speaking today despite a very difficult situation. We have never been gagged by the government. We have been gagged and muzzled by the filibustering of the Progressive Conservative party. Sometimes we are gagged and muzzled by the New Democratic Party, but not very often because the NDP is a little more reasonable than the Conservative party. We on this side of the House are gagged when Conservative members filibuster legislation. Allocation of time is brought about in order to balance the debate. In any event, we on this side do not need an army of members rising to make a point. We are not interested in just making political points and playing politics. We are interested in discussing the effects of programs on Canadians. We do not require a lot of time to do that. I wish allocation of time was applied to every piece of legislation presented in order to ensure a rational use of the time of the House.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): That is new Liberalism.

Mr. Breau: I should like to deal briefly with the outlet that the Tories thought they had. I sympathize with the hon. member for St. John's East because he is used continuously by his party. He is a very sincere man. He sounds sincere and speaks well. He represents a constituency which requires government attention. His province also requires the government to do more regarding its economy. He is from an area which needs government attention. The province of Newfoundland cannot be left with the effects of a laissez-faire attitude and with the private sector looking after it.

We have heard a few good speeches in the last two months by some of the new members of the Conservative party, yet they talk about doing more for Canadians. The hon. member for Rosedale (Mr. Crombie) and other members talked about doing more. I cannot refer to the constituencies of the other members because as yet I am not familiar with them. But we did not hear very much from the people who set the fiscal and economic policies of that party. We all know the Conservative proposals regarding the unemployment insurance scheme. When they talk about reducing deficits, and the intervention of

[Mr. Breau.]

government into the economy, they want to slash the expenditures of government. I would not want to trust them to present a bill dealing with unemployment insurance because I suspect what they would want to do. The poor member for St. John's East is being used as an outlet for the Tory party. They think they have an outlet by proposing a two-tier system of benefits: one for people who have or claim dependants, and one for people who do not have dependants.

Approximately seven or eight weeks ago, the Conservative party criticized us from a human rights standpoint. They used the valid arguments of the human rights commissioner to criticize the government because it thought of bringing in programs which the Conservatives thought were discriminatory to women. The economy of the province of Newfoundland is similar to the economy of my province. In some areas the only employment women obtain is unstable. In a lot of cases, these women are married to men with reasonable salaries because their husbands work in certain industries. Because the husbands have higher incomes, it is normal that they would claim the dependants for income tax purposes.

The Tories have not defined the term "dependant". They have not indicated how they would deal with this area. If a husband works in a good industry and earns \$18,000 to \$20,000 a year, of course he claims dependants in order to save income tax. If his wife works in a fish plant or a restaurant for a few months of the year, her salary will be lower; but they are very lucky to have more than the minimum wage. The hon. member for St. John's East suggested that such a husband would never go on UIC or, if he does, it would be for a very short time at the high rate. They are willing to give the husband 66⅔ per cent by way of unemployment insurance, but the wife who works at the minimum wage will be given 50 per cent.

Miss MacDonald: But the government is going to cut her off.

Mr. Breau: We exclude working women unless they are new entrants or re-entrants into the labour force.

Miss MacDonald: Oh, oh!

Mr. Breau: The hon. member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) is becoming nervous because she is supporting a measure which will penalize people with low incomes, particularly women and single people. We know that single people and women work in the worst conditions.

Miss MacDonald: What about your proposal?

Mr. Breau: If the hon. member looks at any definition of employment or any study on employment, she will find that young people without dependants and women do the worst jobs. They are the people the Tories want to punish. They have said that people with dependants will receive 66⅔ per cent, but the single people and working women, because they cannot claim the benefit of dependants as a result of their lower salaries, will be penalized. The Conservative outlet did not work this time. The Tory party showed that either it cannot