

made the suggestion that the principle, if accepted in our argument against motion No. 10, might also apply to motion No. 13. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) has suggested that motion No. 10 was passed by in Mr. Speaker's comments yesterday but that motion No. 13 was identified as causing some doubt. I think the principle of unacceptability on motion No. 13 almost applies in exactly the same way to motion No. 10, and I do not think that one ruling could be consistent without applying to the other motion, as you have suggested.

In addition to the very significant reason placed before the House by the parliamentary secretary, I want to make another point. The parliamentary secretary has indicated that this motion makes the payment of sickness, pregnancy unemployment insurance benefits available in the extended benefit period, and all the arguments he made are absolutely correct. It widens the risk in time, and it also adds a financial burden to the benefit pay out by virtue of including those people whose payment entitlement would have ceased due to the fact that the re-established initial benefit period had lapsed.

There is another cogent reason as well. Section 136(2)(a) of the Unemployment Insurance Act as amended in 1971, to which there are no amendments whatsoever in Bill C-69, clearly indicates that the government bears the cost of all extended benefits paid, and while the threshold for the initial and re-established benefit period at which government costs take over has been amended in Bill C-69, there is no suggestion in the bill that the government not continue to pay the total cost of extended benefits. In technical terms, the wording of both motion No. 10 and motion No. 13 would have the effect of paying sickness and pregnancy benefits in the extended benefit period, therefore being a charge to the government cost which was not intended in the Unemployment Insurance Act, and indeed not at all contemplated in Bill C-69.

For this reason, in addition to the very significant reasons presented by the parliamentary secretary, I submit that both these motions are in fact not receivable.

**Mr. Rynard:** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if I could have a clarification on two specific cases. One is the case of a gentleman who is working and whose job ceases. He receives benefits and two weeks later he suffers a heart attack, following which he receives sickness benefits. When these benefits run out, his doctor tells him that he is not sufficiently fit to go back to active work, but his job is waiting for him. On what does that fellow live? Does he get any benefits whatsoever?

The second case is that of a fellow who has a heart attack during his working hours. I know of two such specific cases. He is laid off and he receives sickness benefits. In the 15 weeks he is not able to go back to work, his doctor tells him that he is not well enough. The problem is that if he wants to go on pension, it is months before he can get it. What provisions are made to cover a case of this kind?

**Mr. Rodriguez:** Mr. Speaker, in speaking to the point of order let me say that the clause which resulted in our motion No. 10, in the name of the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow), is one in which the minister

#### *Unemployment Insurance Act*

recognized there was a problem. The act recognizes that there is a sickness provision in the Unemployment Insurance Act which permits claimants to collect up to 15 weeks of sickness benefits.

What we have attempted to do in this amendment is to extend the period so that a person may get the 15 weeks of sickness benefits and does not have to get them within 39 weeks. In effect, the minister pointed out the problem quite correctly. An injured person may, for example, receive 10 weeks of regular benefits and then return to work. If this person falls sick within the initial benefit period, his or her entitlement to sickness benefits is restricted to five weeks. When that situation occurs a person stands to forfeit several weeks of benefits to which he or she would be entitled.

What the minister has done with his amendment is to extend the initial benefit period by 10 weeks. But of course that does not solve the problem; it extends it. If a person under the act is entitled to 15 weeks of sickness benefits, what we have attempted to do is to say that he or she should be able to collect 15 weeks of sickness benefits, irrespective of whatever other claims he or she may have had on the fund.

That is the point of sickness benefits, to give people a replacement of their earnings because, as has been pointed out, what happens if a person runs out of weeks under the minister's present amendment and is short of, say, 10 weeks of sickness benefits? What do they do? Do they fall on the tender mercies of the welfare department? I say that the minister should not hide behind the formality of the act. If he wants to be Scrooge, let it be out in the open so we can vote on the amendment. I urge, Mr. Speaker, that you rule that this amendment is in order, and then members of the House can decide whether or not they want the act as amended.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I think I am now in a position to make a judgment, unless hon. members want to pursue some further points.

With regard to the last point made by the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez), I should like to remind him that it is not the responsibility of the Chair to decide whether or not an act or a bill is just, or meets the requirements or standards which it was meant to achieve. The Chair is only here to try to judge as to whether or not a motion, or an amendment, or a bill is procedurally acceptable.

Of course the hon. member for Simcoe North (Mr. Rynard) raised two specific cases on which the Chair cannot comment. This bill may in its application be sometimes unjust to some persons, but is not the responsibility of the Chair either to pass judgment on the act or interpret it. This has not been my concern.

● (2020)

In my opinion the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) did not make a very strong argument as to the acceptability of both of these amendments, with the exception of the point he made about Mr. Speaker's comments with regard to the acceptability of motion No. 10. Of course the hon. member did mention that Mr.