

Canada, Quebec, northern parts of Canada and elsewhere for people who need extended benefits and who, because of the slowdown in the economy, cannot find jobs right away after being laid off.

The extended qualifying period set out in clause 41 is another example of the government's regressive thinking, for it is trying to fight unemployment on the backs of the unemployed. Instead of creating jobs it will discriminate against those who suffer from the Liberal government's mismanagement of the economy. For all these reasons the NDP cannot support the minister's proposals. I hope Liberals and Conservatives representing economically depressed areas are aware of the hardship this bill will work on the unemployed, and will speak against those provisions of the bill to which I referred. To do otherwise is to turn one's back on one's constituents, which no member of parliament should do.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, I had not intended speaking in this debate, but since the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) said some nasty things about my friend, the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez), and called him a little rascal, I must point out who has been the big rascal for the past few years in our unemployment debates. I see that as soon as we go after him he walks out of the House.

Mr. Alexander: No, I am still here.

Mr. Nystrom: You would think that the Conservative party, including the hon. member for Hamilton West, has been defending the unemployed. The hon. member tries to make out that he has been attacking the big, bad government for how it has treated the unemployed. That big, bad rascal, the hon. member for Hamilton West, forgets what he told the government a few years ago, and I feel it appropriate to remind him, because his memory seems faulty.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): He is an honourable rascal.

Mr. Nystrom: Yes, he is an honourable rascal. On February 1, 1977, he said that back in 1971, when fewer were unemployed and the economy was healthier, he remembered telling the minister who was responsible for bringing in this monstrosity of a law to include in the program incentives to work. He suggested that 12 weeks of employment should be the minimum qualifying requirement, but the minister said, no. He said he had made that point six years ago. The hon. member for Hamilton West said in the House that the minister was going to be hard on the unemployed; but the rascal from Hamilton West suggested that the minimum attachment period should be extended from eight to 12 weeks.

The hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp) is quoted in the *Montreal Star* of January 13, 1977, as saying this:

It is my personal view that the 12 weeks should be increased to levels in the former UIC program of 20 weeks. It is evident the changes are necessary and the government should be commended for introducing these changes . . .

Employment and Immigration

The hon. member for Provencher supported the great changes the minister wants to make to the unemployment insurance program; at the same time the hon. member for Hamilton West is attacking the hon. member for Nickel Belt, saying he is against job creation. He could not even quote him correctly. Really, the hon. member for Hamilton West and other members of the Conservative party talk out of both sides of their mouths.

My hon. friend from Nickel Belt tells me that when the hon. member for Hamilton West and his colleagues meet the trade unions they talk about the big, bad government across the way, and condemn it for trying to hurt the working people and short change them with unemployment insurance benefits. As soon as the trade union people leave, they talk out of the other side of their mouths, speak of all the abuses against the unemployment insurance fund and say the sorts of things I read into the record a moment ago. It seems that the hon. member for Hamilton West has a convenient memory. He and his colleagues remember what they want, depending on their audience and whom they are addressing.

Time and again the Conservative members have said they want the qualifying period extended, benefits to the unemployed cut, and so on. The big rascal from Hamilton West represents a working town. I was in Hamilton last Saturday night and Sunday, and noticed that it is a working class town, a steelworkers' town. Many in the town are worried about unemployment, and many have been laid off. I took a taxi with a guy who worked for Stelco for 20 years and was laid off. He had been getting UIC benefits, but was cut off.

Mr. Paproski: What! You can still get a taxi?

Mr. Nystrom: He finally got a job driving a taxi part time. He was trying to make a few bucks. He had a family to raise and a home to keep. You would think the member for Hamilton West would be interested in helping people like that. But no. The hon. member wanted to extend the minimum attachment period.

I look forward to the day we televise this House, because then the people of this country will see how Conservative members speak out of both sides of their mouths.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): As you do.

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, if only the constituents of the hon. member for Northumberland-Miramichi (Mr. Dionne) could see him in the House today! About 30 per cent of his constituents are unemployed, but he is arguing in this House that we should make the unemployment bill more restrictive and tighten it.

Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): I never did any such thing. Now who is talking out of both sides of his mouth?

Mr. Nystrom: Mr. Speaker, I suggest the hon. member is doing precisely that. I, the hon. member for Sault Ste. Marie (Mr. Symes), and the hon. member for Nickel Belt spent much time this afternoon trying to convince the House that the