

is saying that it is a provincial responsibility then I think it is shirking its duty. I think it is just passing the buck. In fact, when I mentioned that to a number of my constituents and said I would be speaking today, they actually said: "I find it hard to believe that they are passing the buck because they seem to be collecting as much money as they can get through taxes and just passing on the problems to someone else". That is an opinion shared by a number of Canadians; not necessarily every Canadian, but it is certainly shared by some.

I want to come back to the intent here today, and that is to correct an injustice in the system. It is just a matter of housekeeping. I have talked with a lot of individual MPs and they have told me that it is a good idea. When we talk about private members' hour, the problem is that quite often the government does not want to pass private members' bills. If we look at the record of private members in seeking to pass a bill, we see that is a major problem.

I want to go back and talk a little bit about the Constitution and the new constitutional package which this government wants to promote across the land. A new pamphlet has been put out entitled *An Invitation to Help Build a New Canada*. That is going to go to every household in Canada, so I am told. On page 6 it says: "We need to make our federal institutions more democratic and more responsive to Canadians. At the heart of the problem is a need for parliamentary reform". I believe all members would agree with that.

It goes on to say: "Many Canadians tune in to televised sittings of the House of Commons, but they are turned off by what they see". They want to see more free votes; that is what they want to see. The government has agreed to that and most members agree that we should have more free votes. That is why I hope we will see later when the vote is taken that it is not just a party vote where maybe the government of the day decides it does not like the bill or it will not get the credit for passing the bill and it has told its members to say this about it, just talk about it, and then at the end vote against it.

I would hope that we would start now with this constitutional package, if it really means something. I would hope that we would set the example. I would hope that members opposite and adjacent would look at the bill for what it is worth and say: "I think it is a good bill. I will vote for it", or "I do not think it is a good bill and I will vote against it". If that is their wish that is no

problem, but I would hope that it is an individual desire to vote one way or the other.

I would feel very satisfied with that. I also hope that we would not hear all the government members opposing it just for the sake of opposing it. I believe that is at the root of some of the problem in the land. People have lost a little bit of trust in the system, not in politicians. People tend to equate that with a loss of trust in politicians. If you go to your constituents and talk on a one-to-one basis, there is no problem with politicians as such. It is the system they are complaining about. It is a system like this one where this woman had a problem with UI.

It only makes common sense. If you talk to people they agree with what should happen. They are hoping that members of Parliament who are here today will listen and will improve the system. That is what it is all about. We should start here in private members' hour. In fact that is where the ultimate free vote should always be. It should not matter. We should not even get a declaration from the minister about whether he is for or against. We should just come in here and say: "Let us go to it", and if you agree with it, you agree with it.

[Translation]

In concluding, Mr. Speaker, I think all members of this House should support my amendment. I think that in this case, partisanship should be relegated to second place and the interests of all Canadians allowed to come first. I therefore urge members of all political parties to support this amendment. The interests of their constituents are at stake.

• (1720)

Since it was created in 1940, our unemployment insurance system has always had equity as its main characteristic. Since section 14 ignores this principle and is basically unfair, it should be amended. Any vote against this bill may very well be perceived as a vote against the interests of Canadians.

[English]

I hope that my pleas to reform the unemployment system have not fallen on deaf ears.

Mr. Jack Shields (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the bill before us today, Bill C-211, an act to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act tabled by my hon. friend, may appear at first glance to have very laudable goals, to permit people serving on jury duty or performing other