

find work for those extra weeks. In fact, 9,205 people are registered with the local Manpower centre at Rivière du Loup, out of a potential labour force of 33,000. This means 30 per cent of the labour force is actively seeking work. The figures do not include those registered in Manpower training programs or those receiving social welfare assistance, even if they are able to work. They are a minority. Job opportunities in the community are very limited and people cannot even find eight weeks' work, much less the ten weeks that is being proposed.

The question of the importance of work has been discussed in this debate. Some would have us believe that people do not want to work today, that they are work-shy or are not interested in working. I disagree with this view. There has been talk of loss of the work ethic, but I do not believe this has happened at all. It is a fact, however, that the government does not have the ability, the foresight or the will to do things with the economy that would put people to work, so it finds all sorts of excuses for its lack of ability. To reinforce this, I should like to quote from a paper entitled "Jobs and poverty: a report on Canada's working poor", published in June, 1977, where the following passage appears:

Work means more to most people than simply making money. Above and beyond the income it produces, and the things money can buy, work brings self-respect and personal satisfaction and defines a person's position in his community and the wider society. Where and how we work strongly influences most aspects of our lives, from friendships we maintain and places we live, to the way we raise and educate our children. Along with the family, work is a core institution which provides order and meaning to our daily lives.

We see that for many people who are unemployed, and for the poor, work is a very important pastime because it gives them dignity and a sense of belonging in the community. I want to comment, now, on why the government felt it had to tamper with the qualifying period. The minister and his bureaucrats all said it was a disincentive to work.

**Mr. Alexander:** You said all that before.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** Mr. Speaker, when we were in committee—

**Mr. Hogan:** You never seem to get the message.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** We will give it to you now.

**Mr. Alexander:** Oh, sit down.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** The Canadian Labour Congress appeared before the committee and presented a brief. A rather interesting exchange took place between the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) and Mr. Chafe who represented the congress.

**Mr. Alexander:** Don't be selective; read it all.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** I want to quote from the passage which related to the qualifying period, as follows:

**MR. ALEXANDER:** It has been brought to our attention that as a result of studies, whether or not we are talking about the comprehensive review, the eight-week eligibility period or qualifying period, as the case may be, was a disincentive. It has been pointed out that those who were working were really taking advantage of the act because they could have worked longer but in certain instances they did not, and the commission or the minister, as the case may be,

### *Employment and Immigration*

found as well that when the benefits ran out, as a result of being involved with an eight-week eligibility period, it was not too long thereafter that these persons were able to acquire employment. Have you any reply to those, I believe, correct statements made by the minister.

The hon. member for Hamilton West thinks the eight-week minor attachment period is a disincentive to work, but he did not produce any facts to support that view. Mr. Chafe gave him what I consider an appropriate answer when he said:

**MR. CHAFE:** Well, Mr. Alexander, if I might deal first of all with the popular phrase "disincentives to work", in our view, having looked at most of the material that has been produced in this respect, that the studies we refer to, which were done largely by economists and people in the academic field, are not at all positive about that. In fact, there have been glaring inconsistencies in some of the studies done. One of them, in particular, was done on the basic premise that all unemployment is voluntary in the first place and he went from there to try to reach a conclusion that the new Unemployment Insurance Act of 1971 had a disincentive effect that would increase, I believe, the average unemployment rate by 1.5 per cent. To be quite blunt about it we think these studies that were done in that respect are far removed from reality, that the people who are doing them are largely doing it on a theoretical basis and that they know nothing about the realities of "joblessness".

There have been other indications of similar activity on the periphery of unemployment insurance and nobody, in our estimation, yet, has presented any kind of concrete proof whatsoever that the minor-attachment claimants, under the present act, are the perpetrators of all of the so-called difficulties that seem to be attributed to the operation of the Unemployment Insurance Act. It is a matter of record, with the Unemployment Insurance Commission, that the minor attachment claimants in the system are a minority of the claimants.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his allotted time has expired. He may continue with the unanimous consent of the House. Is there unanimous consent?

**Some hon. Members:** No.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** Who said no?

**An hon. Member:** Everybody said no.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** Order, please. The hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) on a point of order.

**Mr. Alexander:** Mr. Speaker, in light of the fact that the hon. member did not know who said no, and so that there will be no mistake on the record, it was I, the hon. member for Hamilton West, who said "No" to the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez).

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Rodriguez:** You should be ashamed of yourself.

● (1130)

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Charles-Eugène Dionne (Kamouraska):** Mr. Speaker, the amendment which is now being discussed reads as follows:

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "That", and by substituting therefor the following words:

"Bill C-27 be not now read a third time, but that it be referred back to the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration for the purpose of reconsidering clause 29 and 30 thereof."