

Unemployment Insurance Act

tey) in their speeches have berated me personally. I shall not take them up on it, as the member for Beauce (Mr. Racine) has done a great job of answering them. However, I distinctly remember that the hon. member for St. Hyacinthe-Bagot, in seeking to show that the Liberals and the C.C.F. members—in other words the opposition—were really not interested in the welfare of labour, told us in pathetic tones, almost with tears in his eyes, that he knows the labouring man and that the labouring man knows him.

Mr. Chairman, if the hon. member's remarks were aimed at the opposition, let me point out to him that he was barely out of the cradle when I organized a store employees' union and that, in 1936, I negotiated various collective bargaining agreements in the riding of Hull, at a time when the hon. member for St. Hyacinthe-Bagot had everything to learn about industrial relations.

Mr. Chairman, my remarks so far were meant as a preface to the fact that several hon. representatives, including the hon. members for Brome-Missisquoi, St. Hyacinthe-Bagot, Cape Breton South (Mr. MacInnis) and even the Minister of Labour (Mr. Starr), have sought to indicate that our purpose in rising in this debate was to block passage of this bill.

For my part, I maintain that the bill is so inadequate that it would be to the advantage of labour if it did not go through. And since those hon. gentlemen claim that our reason for taking the floor is to retard proceedings, let me remind them that we suggested to them, early in the session, that the debate on the address in reply to the speech from the throne be adjourned so that we might consider any legislation calculated to check unemployment in this country. I remind them that they unanimously refused to accept our suggestion.

Mr. Chairman, why did not the government accept at the very start of the session, the opposition's suggestion to take up right then a bill as important as the one now before the house?

Some hon. members claim that our purpose is to hinder passage of this bill. Yet, they do not agree with the Prime Minister (Mr. Diefenbaker) who said, as may be seen on page 4239 of the official record of June 2:

(Text):

I do not belong to that school, nor have I ever adhered to the suggestion that beneficial discussion shall not take place on every measure that comes before the house.

(Translation):

And further on, the Prime Minister said:

(Text):

There is no question of a target date—

(Translation):

And the Prime Minister went on to say:

(Text):

—as he suggested. I for one would not to the slightest degree concur in any suggestion that we determine upon a target date—

(Translation):

Those were, Mr. Chairman, the remarks made by the Prime Minister. And yet, the Minister of Labour has set a deadline for consideration of his bill. He put off introducing it to forestal a thorough discussion of it. Well, we availed ourselves of the rights granted members of the opposition to discuss the legislation, just as my friends opposite did in 1950 and at all sessions which have taken place since I have been a member.

In fact, since 1953, they have used the standing orders of the house to extend the debate as long as possible. The pipe-line debate lasted twenty-one days without the substance of the matter having been considered at all. It was all made up merely of points of order and questions of privilege.

Mr. Chairman, we intend to consider this bill fully, and if the ministers want to take part in the debate and indulge in personalities, we intend to return to the charge and reply on each occasion.

The hon. Minister of Labour said this morning that, in 1950, the hon. member for Essex East (Mr. Martin) who had, at the time, introduced the Unemployment Insurance Act had, by means of interruptions and points of order, prevented the opposition from discussing the bill.

Mr. Chairman, according to a report from the Canadian Congress of Labour, in 1950 Mr. Gordon Graydon, a Conservative member, used precisely the same line of argument we are using today; and yet the situation was not the same then, because there were about \$600 million in the fund at the time, and the fund kept growing, whereas today it is in perilous condition. The situation is therefore different. Here is what Mr. Graydon said, as recorded on page 214 of *Hansard* for February 24, 1950:

(Text):

It seems to me we have reached the limit of absurdity when we ask the workers of this country to put up more money to solve the unemployment situation. That is the government's job, not the workers.

(Translation):

That, sir, is what we contend today. It is up to the government to make up for the deficit in the unemployment insurance fund. We are told that this bill will yield \$78 million or more to replenish the fund.