

Supply

weeks to 7 to 12 weeks; that bringing the rate of benefits down from 60 to 57 per cent of the eligible earnings will severely penalize the middle class and the working poor; that the provisions of Part IV of the bill have to be amended; that it is the employers who fill in the reason for leaving on the record of employment, without any input from the workers; that the federal government will have to find another way to penalize those who abuse the system, perhaps with a system similar to the one for drunk drivers all these are things people told us.

I consulted the people in my riding, and my riding is the largest in all of the 10 provinces of Canada. I did not take any holidays. I spent my time in the field, because I wanted to hear what the people had to say and I will keep listening. They told me that the federal government should have consulted the people of Canada before introducing Bill C-105, that some employers, taking advantage of the fact that they receive piles of applications because of high unemployment, do not hesitate to give the boot to employees if they make the slightest mistake. The fact of the matter is that, in isolated areas north of Matagami, a foreman can summon an employee who is on his way out and assign him extra work to do before leaving. This happens. Five just causes are mentioned in Bill C-105. We learned this morning from the political assistants of the employment and immigration office that case law recognizes no less than 40 other just causes for quitting voluntarily.

Today, I did read the Liberal motion which was tabled two months late. The Bloc Québécois did not even table a motion and the same goes for the NDP. On the other hand, we hear them criticizing us on television, like the member from the other side of the river who comes here once in a while. We did not see the member for Hull-Aylmer today. We did not see him rise in the House. He was not here.

I have been mandated by my constituents from Abitibi, whom I have met and listened to. I have been asked to have Bill C-105 amended at second reading, in the legislative committee and at third reading, because of the workers as much as the employers and the unemployed but not because of a Liberal motion which was tabled yesterday at the last minute. I am not bound by a Liberal motion, a motion from the opposition. I am going to tell you why I will abstain from voting. It is because this motion is false and demagogic. Tonight, in deference to my constituents, concerns in Abitibi, I am going to

abstain from voting because I am looking forward to the study in the legislative committee and third reading. I am not doing it because of the Liberal Party of Canada, which has been out of the Abitibi riding for the past eight years.

• (1910)

Hon. André Ouellet (Papineau—Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to intervene to ask the member for Abitibi a question.

Before asking him my question, I would remind him that I had the pleasure of receiving in my office Mr. Paul Robert, the provincial director for the reinforcing-steel erectors of the construction branch of the Quebec Federation of Labour, together with members of Local 777 who came to tell me about their total and complete opposition to this government bill which is very unfair to Canadian workers who, unfortunately, are losing their jobs.

I did tell Mr. Robert that the Liberal Party of Canada was opposed to this measure and when the bill is presented to the House, we will express our objection and opposition to it on behalf of workers in Quebec and throughout Canada. We will vote against it. We are not like some Conservative members who make statements denouncing this bill, but who go away so as not to be here for the vote.

I ask the hon. member for Abitibi this. How come he is trying to have the people believe today that this motion before us should not be? He should know very well that the opposition parties have only a few very limited opportunities to express their point of view, on opposition days designated by the government. Only when the government lets us decide what we will talk about in this House can we do that.

I ask the member, who sits on the government side, who determines the agenda. He knows very well that very often the government limits discussion on a bill. Why does he not let us vehemently oppose this bill? On behalf of the workers who may be affected in his own riding, will he have the courage to vote against this bill and support us this evening by saying that this motion condemning the government for this bill deserves the attention of this House and the support of all members, whether in opposition or on the government side, who really care about the interests of workers who at any time in their lives can become unemployed?