

Unemployment Insurance Act

Unemployment Insurance Act, but none of them has been brought in as yet. In the interim period, many things have happened. Some time ago I documented almost \$1 billion defrauded from the Unemployment Insurance Commission. I could document those cases now from memory, but I do not think it is necessary. It is interesting to note that just recently the special investigative branch of the Unemployment Insurance Commission has been closed. I would be very curious to know whether or not the administration feels that all the various abuses have now been curtailed, or whether my colleagues and I have not spent enough time criticising the administration of the UIC and, as a result, members on the other side feel that since the heat is off they do not need to worry about it.

Mr. Rompkey: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of order to set the record straight. The matter of abuses has certainly not been dropped. We have been carrying out checks, and I might say that since January a thousand cases have come to light where illegalities have taken place with regard to claims for unemployment insurance. We are using a computer for the checks, and not only are we checking claimants but also employers with regard to any activities which might be not above board. Certainly checks have not been stopped.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): Order, please. This is far from being a point of order.

An hon. Member: Nevertheless it is true.

Mr. Ellis: Not only is this not a valid point of order but I would do some very serious checking because my sources of information, which are usually impeccable, tell me that this branch has been closed for all practical purposes.

The hon. member for Peel-Dufferin-Simcoe asked about statistical information. This administration is extremely good at doing one thing if nothing else, that is, hiding the statistics that we could all use to judge better the efficiency of this over \$2 billion a year "industry" that is dispensing funds within the administration. The document that I have here is called The Statistical Report on the Operation of the Unemployment Insurance Act. The earliest you can get this document is three to four months after it has been issued. I know that the statistics contained in it are only one-quarter of the statistics available, and I also know that these statistics are available immediately after the end of the month. One thing that a computer does do well, if it does not do anything else, is to provide that type of information quickly. I suggest to the hon. member that he ask some of his colleagues to look back and they will find that, for example, in 1973 the prediction of UIC computers regarding unemployment in the country at that time were accurate within one decimal point. That information is available; it is just the case that we who could use it cannot get our hands on it.

Another point that the hon. member made has to do with the forms that are being filled by the various people who apply for unemployment insurance. These forms are probably the worst designed forms I have seen, the most ill-conceived, the least decipherable, and the most ambiguous pieces of paper that the bureaucracy has ever produced. We, as members, do not have to make unemployment insurance payments and I hope I will never have to

[Mr. Ellis.]

claim benefit because I do not know whether I could fill out those forms properly.

I have claimants who come to me frequently. If the hon. member opposite has only 200 claimants coming to him, then I can only conclude that he has not been around here too long, because those who are involved have many more than that coming to them for advice. I certainly have one person on my staff looking after them because, not only are they difficult cases, they are difficult to the point of frustration.

Admittedly the administration of the local offices has improved. Let me take a moment to compliment those in the local offices in the Belleville area. They have improved their public relations and their service. Yet the over-all administration has not changed, and the over-all need for strong amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act has not lessened at all. Consideration should be given to the possibility of someone who has worked all his life perhaps receiving a bonus for not having drawn unemployment insurance, and to a penalty being imposed on habitual users. There is also the matter of making it a load on the welfare branches in the municipalities if it is a welfare program, and sometimes it is just that. Let us not call this an actuarially sound unemployment insurance program.

Since we want to draw this debate to a close let me conclude by saying that if the hon. member wants to see these amendments brought in, let him impress on his own caucus the importance of having these amendments brought forward, and he can be sure that this party will consider them favourably as quickly as possible.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Morin): The hour provided for the consideration of private members' business has now expired. Perhaps the House will be agreeable to going back into committee of the whole before the Chair calls it six o'clock. Is it agreed?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

PETROLEUM ADMINISTRATION ACT

MEASURE RESPECTING THE ADMINISTRATION OF THE INTERPROVINCIAL, EXPORT AND IMPORT TRADE IN PETROLEUM AND PETROLEUM PRODUCTS

The House resumed consideration in committee of Bill C-32, to impose a charge on the export of crude oil and certain petroleum products, to provide compensation for certain petroleum costs and to regulate the price of Canadian crude oil and natural gas in interprovincial and export trade—Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale)—Mrs. Morin in the chair.

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock tonight.

At six o'clock the committee took recess.