

*Government Orders*

The hon. member for Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt on a point of order.

**Mr. Whittaker:** Mr. Speaker, I look to the Chair for a direction. I understood that there were no questions and comments on the first two speeches, but there were comments on the last speech. Is that correct? I look for direction on that.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The member is absolutely correct. There will be questions and comments. That is my mistake.

On questions and comments, the hon. member for Okanagan—Similkameen—Merritt.

**Mr. Whittaker:** Mr. Speaker, I considered it from the point of view of employers and employees to see how it will affect the people of Canada. I looked in small municipalities across Canada to see who the major employers were in those areas. In many municipalities in my riding, as is true across Canada, it appeared that the major employers were hospitals, municipalities and school districts.

I wondered, if these are major employers, how that is that going to affect the people in the various areas of Canada with respect to the Unemployment Insurance Act. Most people from the other side of this House say that the employers and employees are now going to be paying their share and the government will be getting into the job training aspect. When the major employers are those people whom I have spoken of, how is that going to affect the average Canadian within each of the areas of Canada?

Can the member give us an idea of the implications for the average property owner and the average renter in Canada as a result of these unemployment changes? Is in fact the effect of this bill to pass on a tax structure or part of the tax structure and the cost of this to the property owners within Canada?

**Mr. Fisher:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for the question.

It was not only the opposition members on the committee who recognized how devastating these changes were going to be, it was not only the advocacy groups for the disadvantaged people of this country who are going to be so adversely affected, and it was not only the members who came to us from the unions. I can understand why the members opposite hate unions.

Those outboard marine people are making \$14 an hour in Canada and when that work is taken to the United States, the workers will only be getting \$6 an hour. I can understand why they dislike unions.

The cities as well recognized how devastating this would be for them and they recognized it in two different aspects. First of all, they did realize that they as employers would be subject to the increase in the premiums which they would have to pay. The increase is somewhere in the neighbourhood of 17 per cent. Considering that many of the municipalities have a considerable number of employees, certainly from that point of view alone there will be an increase in cost to the municipalities and the cities.

Second, Bill C-21 by the government's own figures is going to exclude entirely, across this nation, 30,000 people. That is a rather "Conservative" figure. Other studies have shown that there are going to be thousands and thousands of Canadians who will literally no longer be eligible to receive unemployment insurance. I think these studies could have been shown to be more reliable if the government had allowed the committee on C-21 to hear the people who made them in order for them to establish the validity of their assessments based on Stats Canada figures rather than some 11 year old suppositions which resulted in, as has already been referred to, thought control and behaviour modification.

If they do not receive that assistance what are they going to do? Certainly the cities are going to have to look at these people and make a decision. Are they going to subsidize these people through the welfare rolls because the government has abrogated its responsibility on unemployment insurance, or are they going to let them starve? The obvious answer is that course they are not going to let them starve.

Several cities submitted briefs. The city of Toronto in its brief estimated that in the first year it will cost the city \$10 million. What will occur subsequent to that is anyone's guess, but it certainly is not going to get any better. The city of Sudbury recognized that the same kind of problem will occur for them. Although being a smaller area the numbers would be less, the effect is no less. If someone is hungry it does not matter whether they are in Sudbury or Toronto. The city of Vancouver presented a brief. They considered it so serious that the person who presented the brief in Vancouver was the mayor of the city.