

*Labour Adjustment Benefits*

**Mr. John McDermid (Brampton-Georgetown):** Mr. Speaker, we will not be supporting this particular amendment. I think it is very unfair that employers be asked to give a year's notice if 50 or more employees will be laid off, especially in the economic times we are now facing. I do not think it is right to ask an industry or a business of any type, whether a small business employing under 50 employees, which the NDP has termed as small business, or one which employs over 50 employees, to give a year's notice or to give a half year's notice. In this day and age, it is just completely unrealistic, and the Progressive Conservative Party cannot support that.

**An hon. Member:** That figures! To hell with people!

**Mr. Blenkarn:** Just try to run a business that way!

**Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, while those two opposition members are settling their quarrel, I would submit to Your Honour that the amendment which we are proposing which, in essence, focuses on 16 weeks is a reasonable step forward, and we would accordingly seek the support of the House.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** Order, please. The question is on motion No. 19. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion? All those in favour please say yea.

**Some hon. Members:** Yea.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** All those opposed please say nay.

**Some hon. Members:** Nay.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** Negatived on division.

*And more than five members having risen:*

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** Pursuant to Standing Order 75(11), the recorded division on the proposed motion stands deferred.

The next two motions, Nos. 20 and 21, will be grouped for debate but will be voted on separately.

**Hon. Chas. L. Caccia (Minister of Labour)** moved:

Motion No. 20

That Bill C-78, an act to provide for payment of benefits to laid-off employees and to amend the Canada Labour Code, be amended in Clause 31 by striking out line 23 at page 25 and substituting the following therefor:

"(2) In attain-".

**Mr. Lyle S. Kristiansen (Kootenay West)** moved:

Motion No. 21

That Bill C-78, an act to provide for the payment of benefits to laid-off employees and to amend the Canada Labour Code, be amended in Clause 31 by striking out line 34 at page 25 and substituting the following therefor:

"program as expeditiously as possible, to achieve this end the committee shall have access to all relevant company information including financial statements and records."

**Mr. Kristiansen:** Mr. Speaker, in addressing Motions Nos. 20 and 21 together, as the Speaker has suggested, my first comment is a question. I quite frankly wonder why the amendment of the minister and the government party to the section

under Motion No. 20 was undertaken. All that has been removed is "Subject to subsection (3)", which is found on page 25 of the bill. Subsection (3) states:

The members of a joint planning committee shall co-operate and make every reasonable effort to develop an adjustment program as expeditiously as possible.

I have been searching my mind—never mind smart comment; I was waiting for that!

**Mr. Lewis:** You have lots of time left!

**Mr. Kristiansen:** If you can find it, my friend, you are a better man than I am. I do not mean the mind; I mean the argument. However, I have been searching, as hard as I might, to try to find a reason why the subsection, which is basically a good faith subsection should have been removed. Subsection (2), as it would read, states:

—in attaining its object under subsection (1), a joint planning committee may, unless the members of the committee agree otherwise, deal only with such matters as are normally the subject matter of collective agreement in relation to termination of employment.

Perhaps at some point in the debate the minister will answer the question what is wrong with consideration being given to the expeditious development of an adjustment program. In the absence of being able to find a reason, one's imagination starts soaring. For the life of me, I cannot come up with a reasonable explanation why it should be deleted. Maybe it was simply sloppy in the first place. If that were the case, we could understand it. However, I would like some rationale from the government as to the reason for that particular amendment.

● (1530)

Dealing with Motion No. 21, the amendment is as follows:

That Bill C-78, an act to provide for the payment of benefits to laid-off employees and to amend the Canada Labour Code, be amended in Clause 31 by striking out line 34 at page 25 and substituting the following therefor:

"program as expeditiously as possible, to achieve this end the committee shall have access to all relevant company information including financial statements and records."

It is vitally necessary, if the joint committees are to act, as envisioned by the original bill and as further envisioned by the two amendments which stem from consideration in committee—one which allowed the joint committees established to look into matters of the broader social and economic consequences, and the second amendment which was a positive statement empowering the joint committees to make recommendations which might result in the cancellation or reduction of the number of terminations—that the committees have the right of access, and certainly the right to inquire as to the relevant company information, including financial statements and records.

If the government does not want this provision, is it suggesting that the joint committees established to give force to the expressed wishes of the bill are to operate in the dark? Is that what the government wants? The joint committees will, in effect, be a fraud? If so, there is no better way of doing it than