

*Unemployment Insurance Act*

I am suggesting that it is our responsibility to look at this matter in more detail, to develop such legislation more carefully on the basis of consultations already held with various groups interested in such a decision before we bring in legislation to pay benefits to parents who adopt children. In opposing this Bill—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin):** The Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin).

● (1740)

**Mr. Benjamin:** Mr. Speaker, I am sorry to interrupt the Hon. Member but I understand we are going to be interrupted shortly. Since we have little enough time for private Members' Bills, and in order to facilitate dealing with my Bill, I would like to ask the unanimous consent of the House to agree to sit for whatever time past the hour of six o'clock in order to provide the complete one-hour debate for my Bill?

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin):** Does the House agree to the proposal put forth by the Hon. Member for Regina West (Mr. Benjamin)? Is there unanimous consent?

**An Hon. Member:** No.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin):** There is not unanimous consent. The Hon. Member for Moncton (Mr. McCauley) has the floor.

**Mr. McCauley:** Mr. Speaker, I will quickly conclude because I know my friend, the Hon. Member for Simcoe North (Mr. Lewis), has a few remarks he wishes to make on this Bill.

In opposing this Bill, this House would not be voting for or against adoption. Nor would this House be voting for or against giving some form of benefits for modern families who may need some temporary income support while caring for an adopted child during the first months. After all, in some ways, the role of parents who adopt children is often harder than that of the natural parent. But I find I cannot support this motion because its specific provisions do not accord with the principles underlying the existing provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Act, the advice of qualified experts and the legitimate interests of private and public sector groups in Canadian society.

**Mr. Blaikie:** I would like it on the record, Mr. Speaker, that it was the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Schroder) who denied unanimous consent to have this matter discussed—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin):** Order. That is hardly a point of order. The Hon. Member for Simcoe North (Mr. Lewis).

**Mr. Doug Lewis (Simcoe North):** Mr. Speaker, I echo the sentiments of my friend, the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie), to the effect that it is regrettable that the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Schroder) refused unanimous consent.

I am pleased to rise in support of this Bill, Mr. Speaker. I believe, as expressed in the Bill, that an adoptive parent should

be entitled to pregnancy benefits the same as natural parents. I addressed this matter in the House of Commons last Fall. I note, Mr. Speaker, that in 1981, a task force on Unemployment Insurance recommended that the change be made. That recommendation was made in the interests of equity and fairness on the theory that benefits under the Unemployment Insurance Act should be extended to newly adoptive parents. Parents who adopt children face the same physical, mental, social and economic adjustments as natural parents, and they often have no advance notice of the date of adoption. I have received letters from concerned constituents. I would like to quote from a letter I received from a woman in Penetanguishene, who said:

Even though, in my case, I have contributed to the UIC for approximately eight and a half years, I will not be eligible—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin):** Order. I regret to interrupt the Hon. Member but the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Schroder) rises on a point of order.

**Mr. Schroder:** Mr. Speaker, it was not my intention to deny unanimous consent to continue past six o'clock and allow the speaker to continue.

**Mr. Lewis:** You may understand that, I do not.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin):** Is the Chair to take that as a withdrawal of the refusal to give unanimous consent? It was taken as such. The Chair should make absolutely sure that there is unanimous consent to prolong the debate beyond the normal time of adjournment, which is six o'clock in this case, so as to complete the full 60 minutes of debate provided for under Standing Orders. Is it agreed?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Corbin):** It is so ordered.

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the Parliamentary Secretary for reconsidering his position. I was quoting from a letter from a woman in Penetanguishene who made the point that she had contributed to UIC for approximately eight and a half years and that she will not be eligible to collect any benefits once her chosen child arrives. She also makes the point, Mr. Speaker, that the Children's Aid Society requires that a parent be in the home full time for a minimum of six months. The Children's Aid Society recognizes that there is indeed an adjustment period which in fact is even more vital in forming an adoptive family. I have another letter, Mr. Speaker, from a woman in Orillia who suggests that adoptive parents, both male and female, go through the same emotional adjustments as natural parents. I also have representations from the St. Columbkille's Catholic Women's League in which they agree that adoptive parents should receive Unemployment Insurance maternity benefits the same as natural parents.

I want to put this on the record, Mr. Speaker, because, with five natural children, I know there is an adjustment period. I know from our family friends who have adopted children that there is a physical and mental adjustment which should be addressed. I believe it is absolute discrimination that adoptive parents should not have the same rights under the Unemployment Insurance Act, and I would urge the Government to