

now stands greater flexibility, especially in the case of those who are entitled to maternity benefits.

[English]

We will continue to review the maternity legislation to ensure that within the bounds of UI principles it ensures fair and equitable treatment of maternity claimants and reflects changing federal and provincial labour standards.

It has been argued by some people that there exists an anomaly in the UI legislation which affords benefits to natural mothers yet denies them to adoptive mothers. When a couple adopts, the woman is viewed as being capable of performing a job at all times, unlike a pregnant woman who is in varying degrees incapable during the period surrounding childbirth. Adoptive parents emphasize that the experience of parenthood is similar whether parents are natural or adoptive, and that adoptive mothers have the same need and desire to be near their child. The adopted children also need the same care and attention of a natural child. However, maternity benefits relate only to incapacity or "capability" of working, and do not relate to non-availability, which is a much broader problem relating to many groups besides adoptive parents.

If the adopted child is an infant, the adjustment period would be shorter, perhaps a month, since it would not have the same psychological needs as an older child who has been bounced around foster homes. With an older child, such things as introduction into a more permanent home, a different lifestyle, and two new parents are not achieved overnight. In adoptions, therefore, the adjustment period is a crucial time for both sides involved. Once again, while it cannot be denied that the woman is capable of working, in the interests of the family unit she may be needed at home to smooth the transition period.

In addition, to adopt, parents do not have to be wealthy. And for a couple to lose a source of income for a number of months—the length of time, depending on the age of the child and period of adjustment recommended by a counsellor—is a strain on those who have chosen to start a family voluntarily. It has therefore been argued that if natural mothers are accorded maternity benefits under UI, adoptive mothers should be eligible for some similar kind of benefits.

As outlined above, the needs of adoptive parents are indeed legitimate; however, we feel that the UI program is not the proper vehicle to support incomes of parents who choose to adopt and who must, for very legitimate reasons, drop out of the labour force for a short time. To understand this position fully it is necessary to examine both the context in which maternity benefits are provided in the federal UI legislation, and the provincial context within which the adoption agencies presently operate.

The last five to ten years—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner):** Order. The hour appointed for the consideration of private members' business having expired, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock p.m.

At six o'clock the House took recess.

## *Restraint of Government Expenditures*

### AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### GOVERNMENT EXPENDITURES RESTRAINT ACT

AMENDMENT TO REMOVE CERTAIN RESTRICTIONS RESPECTING TRAINING ALLOWANCE RATES

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Andras that Bill C-19, to amend or repeal certain statutes to enable restraint of government expenditures, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Estimates.

**Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton):** Mr. Speaker, before the dinner hour I was discussing in the context of this particular piece of restraint legislation, at least that is the appellation the government would like to attach to it, the relationship of this whole matter of restraint to the cost of the operations—I think that is the one way to describe it—or the *modus operandi* or behaviour of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Lang) when he recently ran up a bill of expense the like of which could only lead to questions, and indeed has led to questions.

I had moved from that very important matter of the government asking the people to restrain themselves on the one hand, and spending like drunken sailors on the other, into the area involving the Public Service of Canada and the attitude of the government in terms of stability of continued service by that public service.

There are some people who would attribute all the blame for the problems that have arisen in the Public Service of Canada to the public servant as such, to the public servant being granted the important right to carry on the collective bargaining process and all that means, with some notable exceptions, in the public service. I respectfully suggest it is not fair to lay the complete blame on the Public Service of Canada as an institution or on the organizations which represented public servants.

In some cases there has been a real breakdown in relations between the employer and the employee in the public service. As a result there has been a disruption of service on the one hand and an unjustifiable increase in the level of compensation as compared to the private sector on the other, as some critics would suggest.

If we are to deal with the public service in any realistic way, in my respectful submission we do not necessarily have to change the law. The law is a sound instrument and the rights granted to the public service were granted following a long debate in this parliament. Rather, what we have to do is look at the attitude toward bargaining in the Public Service of Canada.