

Unemployment Insurance Act

the House, and for reasons he will not tell us the proposals were not quite the same as he had indicated on September 1.

I feel sorry for members opposite. They have had adequate time to establish a perfect set of rules for the game. But when they are finally forced into action, they cannot stick to their guns for more than a month or two at a time. Now the combined opposition will be blamed for delaying this matter. It is similar to the Grinch who stole Christmas. We will be blamed for sitting here instead of being on Christmas holiday.

I should like to remind the House that the bill was introduced on November 2. Debate on second reading commenced on November 9 at eight o'clock in the evening. At that time there were less than two hours of debate on this important bill in the House. I do not think 34 committee meetings was an unusual amount of study. Many more witnesses could have appeared before the committee in order to tell their problems, but I think we received adequate input from them.

We cannot expect to scrap all of the work which has been done to this point. Restraint and reform are sorely needed. We will see what happens to the amendments we put forth. Then we will make up our minds on the bill itself. For us to support motion No. 1 and thereby scrap all the work which has occurred to this point would be contrary to our policies. Therefore, we will not support the motion before the House.

Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, one has to calm down somewhat after hearing the remarks of the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez). He has a way with words. I was pleased Your Honour chastised him and indicated that he should clean up his language. The hon. member misinterpreted almost everything I have said. He made reference to rip-offs. I have not used those particular words at any time in any of my speeches. Also he suggested that people thought there was a lot of illegality. That is not what the report called for, and the hon. member should know that.

Turning to the motion itself, clause 1 simply is consequential to clause 14. It provides that the Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Small Business) (Mr. Abbott) will be responsible to administer the benefit repayment provisions of the bill. We do not require a long-winded or bombastic debate by the hon. member for Nickel Belt on that particular subject.

The hon. member for Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Clarke) talked about the pregnancy benefits and suggested that we cannot get the particular motion through. As I said to the hon. member at committee, I knew it was not a proper amendment. I indicated that it could not be passed at committee stage, but that I was prepared to bring it forward at report stage on the understanding that clearly the motion was out of order unless it received unanimous consent of the House. As Mr. Speaker said earlier today, for those very reasons we will get into debate tomorrow. But I concede the motion is out of order in so far as the rules are concerned.

● (1622)

I did give an undertaking to members opposite and to the women who will benefit from this particular clause that I would bring the motion forward. If we get unanimous consent of the House it will in fact be carried. If we do not get unanimous consent it will not be carried and certain benefits will be lost by these women. I think it is a little unfair to suggest that we could not even bring forward an amendment that was in order. The hon. member knows I gave that commitment at the committee stage.

I am a little disappointed in the position taken by the NDP. I think there can be legitimate differences of opinion. We have those with members of the official opposition and we certainly have them with members of the NDP. We could have had a good debate, and we could have had solid input rather than the bombast and histrionics we have witnessed from the hon. member for Nickel Belt. There are obviously some areas of this bill that could be improved upon. I would hope that we continue looking at the bill to see how we can make it better and more effective.

However, hon. members of the New Democratic Party have totally destroyed that opportunity by bringing in something like 25 amendments that are all over the park. They really are not interested in a serious debate on this particular bill. Because of that, it is somewhat difficult to respond to the hon. member, particularly when, in respect of an innocuous amendment to a clause in the bill simply indicating that the Minister of National Revenue and Minister of State (Small Business) is responsible for administering this particular part, we get a 40-minute diatribe by the hon. member for Nickel Belt. That, in my opinion, is really not honest debate. I suggest we get on with the vote, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Bob Rae (Broadview): Mr. Speaker, the fact that clause 1 is the subject of the amendment that has been proposed encourages me to take issue with what the minister has just said. The hon. member for Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Clarke) made a similar remark, in respect of the suggestion that, because we were so active in committee and had more than one person in attendance at the 34 or 35 meetings of that committee, this indicated somehow unparliamentary behaviour on our part. It was suggested that the fact that we debated the measure all the way through in terms of its content also put us in this position. I suggest to the minister that, if he looks at the transcript of the remarks made in that committee by various members of our party, he will find very serious criticism of the philosophy that is behind and underlies this bill. Certainly I put forward that criticism, as did the hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez), the hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Faour), the hon. member for New Westminster (Mr. Leggatt) and the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters). We were all there speaking on behalf not only of our constituents, but also on behalf of the many other groups who have come to us asking for help.

Many groups were not able to attend the hearings. The committee did not hear from the largest industrial union in the