

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Dinsdale: On the same question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, my point is that the minister has misinformed the House, which I think gives rise to a legitimate question of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: That is not a question of privilege. The minister may have misinformed the House, but unless the hon. member is prepared to make a charge and suggest that the minister has wilfully misled the House, he has no question of privilege. Orders of the day.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a question of privilege.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Lotbinière is also rising on a question of privilege.

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, if I had asked the question during the question period, you would surely have told me I was out of order. Here is my question: What were the fees paid to the firm of Touche, Ross, Bailey and Smart of Halifax for auditing the books of the Cape Breton Development Corporation?

I was told, Mr. Speaker—

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member is out of order. I point out to him that it is against the rules to ask a question after the question period has expired, under the pretext of rising on a question of privilege. If the hon. member really wants to rise on a question of privilege, I shall hear it and indicate to the House whether it is in order and can be discussed. The hon. member for Lotbinière.

Mr. Fortin: Mr. Speaker, I was getting to the heart of the matter.

At that point you called me to order and rightly so. I therefore had the following question put on the order paper: "What is his annual salary?", to which I got the following answer:

Charges are based on services rendered in respect to each year's audit.

Mr. Speaker, that means that a member of parliament cannot find out how much of the public funds have been spent or allotted to certain expenses ordered by the government.

I feel, Mr. Speaker, that my rights are encroached upon in this connection and that I am absolutely entitled to know why the government has appointed that firm, how much it was paid and why this task was not entrusted with the Auditor General of Canada.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I remind the hon. member that he must comply with the Standing Orders of the House. If he wishes to rise on a question of privilege, he must do so in accordance with the Standing Orders, giving the required notice. Now, since the hon. member has not given that notice, he cannot evidently rise on the question of privilege to which he referred.

[*Mr. Speaker.*]

• (3:00 p.m.)

[*English*]

GOVERNMENT ORDERS**UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE ACT, 1971**

PROVISIONS RESPECTING INSURABLE EMPLOYMENT, COMMISSION, BENEFITS, PREMIUMS, ADMINISTRATION, ETC.

The House resumed, from Tuesday, April 20, consideration of the motion of Mr. Mackasey that Bill C-229, respecting unemployment insurance in Canada, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration.

Mr. Robert McCleave (Halifax-East Hants): Mr. Speaker, I gather there is a disposition to have second reading of this bill settled today and referred to committee for study. At least, that is the case if I interpret correctly the prevailing winds, or lack of the strength of same. My remarks will therefore be brief; I simply want to make two points for the consideration of the committee.

The first point concerns the subject on which I, at least, receive most correspondence with regard to the proposed changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act. I refer to whether or not teachers should be exempt from its provisions. I do not know what the situation is in the rest of Canada, but I do know that in Nova Scotia, and more particularly in the metropolitan area of which my seat forms part, a great number of teachers have been thrown out of work as a result of changes in the economic climate and the policy of the new provincial government. While I used to think that the teachers had made a perfectly legitimate case for not coming within the unemployment insurance provisions because they were a class that had not the same unemployment problems other classes had, I now have to change my mind as a result of the conditions to which I have just referred.

I realize that there are still professional associations representing the teachers that stoutly maintain that teachers should not be part of the class that has to make contributions for unemployment insurance coverage. Although they may speak for the majority within that class, as far as I am concerned if I am called upon to protect the rights of even 10 per cent of a particular group, then I shall stand in Parliament and do my best to protect those rights, and this I do now.

I would also make the other point, which I think is an important one. I do not think that seniority in any profession counts for a damn today, if I may put it as bluntly as that. Times are changing. The fact that somebody is a perfectly good teacher in today's age or was five years ago, does not mean that he or she is equipped to be a good teacher in the Sesame Street type of education that we will have in time to come. In short, the fact that a teacher was good in the past or is good at the present time is no passport to security or to the assurance of a job in that profession, indeed in any profession though especially in the education field, which is responsible for seeing that our children, our children's