

*Government Orders*

to the unemployment insurance benefits as they existed before Bill C-21.

We have asked the government to withdraw Bill C-20 and this Bill C-32. We would like an immediate job creation program this winter not next winter. You cannot postpone the temperature.

Finally we have asked that the federal minimum wage be immediately increased to \$5 per hour. In the spirit of Christmas let us rescind Bill C-32 and we can go back to our provinces with a clean conscience and a conscience that we can share with Canada's poor.

**Mr. Fred J. Mifflin (Bonavista—Trinity—Conception):** Mr. Speaker, I am sure the House is disposed to have me speak for a very short time and I will undertake to do that.

It is seldom that I get the nod from my colleagues from the government side, but I suppose it is Christmas time and one is expecting to get some dispensation on these special occasions.

In all seriousness I did want to make a few comments on this bill. Essentially this cap affects three provinces. While they are outside the jurisdiction of my responsibilities as a federal member of Parliament I will say two things about that. While the cap does not apply to my province of Newfoundland, it does apply to three other provinces that are very close to Newfoundland in many ways. I am going to pick Ontario because as the economy of Ontario goes so does the work prospects of many Newfoundlanders who in the past would leave their homes, their residences or their towns to go and seek work in places like Toronto and other towns and cities in Ontario.

We felt the pinch of about a half a billion dollars if we total it all up in Newfoundland. This is because of a reduction in transfer payments in our case which reduced secondary and post-secondary education and hospital care. I have spoken on this frequently in the House and I am not going to repeat myself this evening. But this cap, as it applies to the province of Ontario and the other two provinces, concerns me greatly.

I do want to compliment my colleague from Winnipeg North who enunciated very clearly some of his concerns. The budget of February 26 was not the most popular

budget in the world. This is I suppose the last act of clearing up what is left.

If I could be permitted to finish in a civilized manner, I would very much appreciate it. I am not known as a heckler on this side of the House so I would ask the indulgence of my comrades across the way.

I think it would be worthwhile for us to remind ourselves who this is applying to and who it is going to affect the most. Who does this cap apply to? Well, I am going to just remind us, just before we close this session of Parliament, that they are the people that I come in contact with as a member of Parliament. I am sure all our colleagues come in contact with them.

[*Translation*]

Among those who benefit from public assistance and social welfare services are children in care or in need of protection because they are abused or neglected, the physically or mentally disabled, single-parent families, the elderly, the unemployed, families of persons in distress, low-income workers and battered women.

[*English*]

These are all types of people we have discussed in great detail in this House in the last session since we met here in early September.

I would have to be very strong in support of the amendment put forward by my hon. friend. I am not always known to support the other opposition other than the Official Opposition, but on this particular occasion I would find it very difficult in my heart to do otherwise.

On the basis of those who are affected by this I would be in support of the amendment. Before I do sit down I would like to also take the occasion to thank you indeed, Mr. Speaker, for your good guidance and judicious seating in the chair. I take this opportunity to wish that all my colleagues will put some of the things we have done in the past year behind us and hope that we can go forward with renewed vigour and with renewed purpose in the new year. Merry Christmas to all and to all a good night.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. members:** Question.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** The question is on Motion No. 1. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?