

The minister, coming from an area where there were large bush operations and where the railroads were a major factor, will remember there has been a long history of political decisions having been made. These decisions were made in respect of fishermen, bush workers and railroad workers. These were political decisions which in my opinion represented abuses of a program which had been in effect. Previous speakers have referred to people who have come to count on being able to work beyond age 65. In many cases these people have never been unemployed, but they are now at an age where sickness may develop and when it may not be easy for them to find a job.

It may be necessary for many of these people, for the first time in their lives, to face unemployment, yet with this legislation they would have no protection in the form of unemployment insurance. I am not, and never have been, in favour of a situation like that in respect of railroaders who were granted six months' or a year's pay after retirement and were told they were entitled to draw one year's unemployment insurance benefits. That is a fact. They were never bothered, because the Liberal party looked at the number of seats that party held in railroad areas and made that political decision in exactly the same way the decision was made in respect of Newfoundland. That decision was also made in respect of northern Ontario, for the same reason, relating to the bush workers.

There have been some bad principles. I think that was a bad principle. It is a principle I cannot support. I do not support the idea that if one pays into unemployment insurance for 40 years, one is entitled to receive his money back. I do not think such a person should get the money back. I do not expect to get back the money I have put into life insurance policies. There will not be any more money there than I have paid in, in any event. One is insured for a specific purpose. Unless that event takes place, one does not receive any benefit. One insures one's house for fire protection, and unless it burns down one does not receive any money. One insures his automobile against an accident, and unless there is an accident there is no payment. I do not think one should get back the payments one has made over a long period into the unemployment insurance fund.

On the other hand, if for 30 years you have been paying premiums and expect some coverage, and then the government decides it does not want you in the labour force after age 65, the government may not be taking into account some of the problems you have. You may have married late in life and may have two or three children still at school. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) will be receiving the old age pension before his children are in high school.

An hon. Member: He does not need it.

Mr. Peters: Probably he does not need it. Some people, however, believe that what one does for himself one should do for everybody else, and vice versa. The Unemployment Insurance Commission can sort out the situation on its computer and determine whether or not a man has a good work record. The commission also has the advantage of being able to ask the type of questions they ask everybody in my riding. I am surprised that the people in the riding of

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the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) are not having any difficulty with unemployment insurance. In my area, where there are ten times the number of people seeking jobs as there are jobs, every day someone is cut off unemployment insurance because he will not travel 200 miles to look for work.

Mr. Alexander: Mr. Speaker, I do not wish to intervene at this time, but I must point out that the hon. member is incorrect when he says we do not have any problems in respect of unemployment insurance in my riding. Of course we have problems. At the same time, I must state that the staff of the Unemployment Insurance Commission have been good in this respect and we have been able to solve many of the problems. The hon. member should not mislead the House by saying we do not have any problems. That is my only comment.

Mr. Peters: I certainly accept that statement. I apologize. In listening to the hon. member, I had the impression that really the benefit control problem was not a problem any longer and that with respect to persons 65 and over it would not be a factor. I am sure the benefit control officer would be able to handle the problem in respect of people over age 65. I do not suggest it would be easy, because we know abuses would take place.

● (1700)

Many people want to get their money back. I am not in agreement with that. But I know of many persons between the age of 65 and 70 who, if they are not out looking for jobs and actively seeking work, are not able to support their families and must go on welfare assistance. This applies even to people beyond the age of 70. I know of many cases of people over the age of 70 who have to seek welfare assistance because employment is not available to them. I suggest that this could be worked out and that protection could be given to people at that age who are actually looking for work and are capable of taking it. There are many people who do not qualify because their health is not good, but there are many others in my area who are denied any kind of provincial or municipal assistance simply because they are not declared unemployable, and if they do get employment they cannot receive these benefits.

I should like to say a few words about the amendment moved by the hon. member for Hamilton West to delete the whole of clause 1, which would affect the sponsors of LIP and LEAP projects. I agree that that clause should be deleted. However, it seems odd that we should include a qualifying sentence stating: "An individual referred to as the sponsor of a project in paragraph (e) of subsection (1) shall, for the purposes of this act and the regulations, be deemed to be an employer in respect of his remuneration from the project."

I assume that this presumption is put in there to indicate that he is not a government employee, yet he is self-employed. He dreams up the project and he administers it. As soon as the project is over, he can draw unemployment insurance benefits and start writing his application under the Opportunities for Youth Program or one of the other programs, and then perhaps qualify again. This can go on almost continuously. It would come under the same category