

Unemployment Insurance Act

Canada will accurately reflect real unemployment levels and not just area wide averages.

I realize that the pledge of this government is to produce work programs. I also realize that at the provincial level, in conjunction with federal programs, there is job creation. I believe that areas such as South Western Nova should have some say in how and where those jobs will be created. I also realize that our fishing industry will have to produce, as well as produce more finished products.

Come next September, October or November when one is looking for the required number of weeks, I hope there will have been jobs in that area in order that the people there can qualify with this ten to 16 weeks repeated provision.

I know the people in my area and all across Canada are looking for reforms within unemployment insurance. However, there must be some discretion as to the hardship this provision will cause if it is included in this bill. I cannot see why one area in Nova Scotia should be discriminated against because of the use of statistic regions.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Before recognizing the next speaker, I should advise hon. members that I am becoming concerned about the way this report stage debate is developing into a second reading stage debate. This may be because of intimations of the Chair in the last session. However, there will have to be a rethinking of the process of report stage with some direction given to the Chair because it is impossible for the Chair, with all the authority given to it, to intervene every time and try to bring a member back to an amendment to a clause. I say this without wanting to prevent any member from participating in the debate. I just draw that to the attention of hon. members. When we get an opportunity tomorrow to look at the debates of today, we may be in a position to evaluate whether we are going in the right direction.

Mr. Forrestall: Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether my distinguished colleague from South Western Nova would reply to a very brief question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: If the hon. member accepts the question, there is no problem.

Miss Campbell: Mr. Speaker, I attended the committee meetings. I did not see the hon. member there. However, if he would like to ask a question, that is fine.

Mr. Forrestall: Having supported this motion in committee, would the hon. member care to indicate to the House how she intends to vote at report stage?

Miss Campbell: The hon. member has been here longer than I. I am sure he realizes the final bill is not here. I will let the hon. member know at that time.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Adrien Lambert (Bellechasse): Mr. Speaker, I have noted the comments you made a moment ago concerning procedure at the report stage of the bill. I am the first one to

[Miss Campbell.]

be dismayed by procedure. I have to put up with it like all other members as long as it exists in its present form, because it has to be enforced. It is not the first time that we witness such confusion in our proceedings specifically as the result of that procedure. We think we are progressing but instead we are moving backwards. I have always maintained that it would be advisable to proceed in committee of the whole. I have always found that we then moved more quickly. Anyhow, Mr. Speaker, I do not want to deal with procedure but merely say a few words about the comment you made a moment ago.

Mr. Speaker, I would like very seriously to give my view on the bill amending the unemployment insurance legislation. I remember that when the bill was passed by parliament some years ago, it then met an essential need. It was after or during the war. It was at a time when there were a great many jobs. With a few exceptions during the seasonal periods, most Canadians could work. It was not so mechanized and modern as it is today, and parliament adopted this legislation to make it possible for workers who became unemployed once in a while to get some money without incurring debts. That is why it was termed an insurance, for workers were called upon to pay a premium to protect themselves.

Later on, the legislation was amended. If the government is complaining today that too many workers are abusing the unemployment insurance legislation instead of actively seeking employment, it is because it introduced amendments which encouraged workers not to work—unfortunately, for a number of them, I do not want to generalize—and then to quit the labour market, because it was more interesting to receive unemployment insurance benefits. The benefits had been increased considerably and made more readily available.

Mr. Speaker, it is when there is much activity in the economy of a country, more particularly in Canada, that the eligibility conditions for unemployment insurance benefits must be the most difficult to meet. In such periods, it is generally possible for workers to find jobs and keep them. Therefore, in such times it is absolutely essential that the law be more strict if we want workers to keep serving the country, if we want them to be patriots and to work in order to transform our resources into useful goods that will be sold at the retail level in order to meet public demand. But when there is a recession, when the economy is in difficulty, when jobs are scarce, when progress has left less and less place for the worker and for the human participation in the production of essential goods or in the transformation of resources, I think the advantages or benefits of a law such as the Unemployment Insurance Act should be easier to obtain. Indeed, we must not penalize people because scientists, intelligent people, have succeeded in inventing and modernizing services. In all fields of activity, everyone aims at producing as much with fewer employees or at producing more without having to use a larger work force and they always succeed.