

worker, the rescue worker? Say that some members have a problem with the last clause "provider of food or shelter for the community".

Let us assume there is a problem with that with someone across the way. I do not think there should be, but let us say there is one. Why do they not all go to committee and remove that portion of it if they have a problem with it?

Here is the situation now. If there is a flood on the Ottawa River going through my constituency, someone who is on unemployment cannot volunteer to go help in that flood because he will have his unemployment benefits cancelled. That is a case of an emergency, and that according to the government across the way is what the rule should be.

Last year there was a fire in Baie Comeau, in the Prime Minister's own riding. Is it logical that a volunteer should not be able to help with the fire because he is receiving UI?

• (1750)

No, that is not logical. I know the members across do not believe it is logical. I say to them, never mind what you were told to read by some functionary, some sidekick to the minister. Speak your mind. Say what you think on behalf of your constituents. Let us change this role. Let us make it right for the people of Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Saint-Julien: Bring it up with the provinces!

Mr. Boudria: The hon. member opposite says: Bring it up with the provinces, at the same time. Volunteer firefighters are not paid.

An hon. member: Yes, they are.

Mr. Boudria: Volunteers who go fight a fire are not paid!

An hon. member: Yes, they are.

Mr. Boudria: The hon. member opposite thinks he knows everything. He thinks there are no volunteer firefighters in Canada. If some of them are listening to us, they will write to the hon. member for Abitibi and let him know they provide their services to all Canadians, they greatly contribute to this country. The unemployed are entitled to fight a fire without asking permission to the hon. member for Abitibi or to anyone else! They should have the right to continue to do so. The same

thing applies if there is a flood in my riding or in yours, Mr. Speaker.

[English]

I say to the members they should have an examination of their own conscience before they read the prepared text that was dictated to them and should speak their own mind. Perhaps the people of Canada will then have some faith in this institution, instead of thinking that we are all a bunch of wimps reading documents prepared by someone else.

Mr. Brian O'Kurley (Elk Island): Mr. Speaker, an amendment to an act of Parliament should improve that act in some way for all concerned, rather than merely complicating it.

My hon. friend wishes to make the unemployment insurance program fairer for jurors and emergency workers whose unquestioned value to society makes our response to this amendment all the more heartfelt.

The hon. member is to be commended for bringing this issue to our attention. What scares me about the amendment before us is that it emphasizes the creation of more and more exceptions in an act already almost overburdened with special cases.

Meanwhile, the end result sought after in the case of jury duty and maybe emergency workers as well is so much easier to achieve through simple administrative changes at the provincial or territorial level and through augmented fees where shortages exist.

We either rewrite the UI act to include more exceptions in special cases or we ask the provinces and territories to pay their jurors more in line with present day wages.

Do we really want to create yet another group of special claimants whose major complaint is that they are often grossly underpaid by their provincial masters?

If the provinces which need their community services so badly are not willing to pay for it, then let them exclude the UI claimant from service.

The Unemployment Insurance Act is geared increasingly to helping Canada build a strong, globally competitive, highly skilled work force. Its cornerstone is that each and every claimant be available for work and actively searching for it and each and every day benefits are paid.