

Unemployment Insurance Act, 1971 (No. 2)

nothing that could be taken seriously. He realizes as well as I do that I approve of some of his proposals and already mentioned this to him, and especially, to give only one example, the proposal for a twenty-minute limit on speeches. I have always found this a sensible proposal and I certainly would support it if presented again.

However, without wishing to judge too severely his manner of proceeding when he was House leader, I think the proposals he made at the time should first have been considered by all parliamentarians in the course of preparing and approving a report by a parliamentary committee. He implied that he could not accept the proposals I made and explained in a speech to federal lawyers a few months ago. I want to make it clear that every single one of the proposals I made on this occasion had been considered previously by a parliamentary committee in 1976 and 1977, or from 1975 to 1976, it does not make much difference, a committee of which both the member for Nepean-Carleton and myself were members. Since these recommendations had already been made by a parliamentary committee, I felt it was entirely proper to air them publicly as being desirable changes in the short term, in order to show some confidence in the growth of our parliamentary procedures and the changes to be made.

In any case, I want to give the hon. member the assurance, since he insisted on drawing a parallel between parliamentary reform and the bill before the House today, that the referral to a special committee is a referral of a very general nature that will make it possible for members on both sides of the House to express their views, without constraint or limitation, regarding all aspects of the rules of this House. In addition, there will be no undue limitation on the committee's proceedings, we have no intention of cutting off the committee's work before it has reported to Parliament, and we earnestly hope that parliamentarians and especially backbenchers, will make a major contribution in suggesting procedural changes, as part of the committee's work. That is why when the member for Nepean-Carleton made it clear that he would agree not to sit on the committee, since he is more or less an old hand at parliamentary procedure, he did so provided I would agree not to chair the committee. I have no objections. I will not sit on the committee if he does not, so that more backbenchers will be able to express their views. In any case, we shall have an opportunity to discuss the matter at the House leader level—I am referring to the membership of the committee. I shall certainly consider the offer made by the member for Nepean-Carleton.

Finally, it should not come as a surprise to him, because earlier today I advised the Progressive Conservative House leader and the House leader for the New Democratic Party, of my intention to give notice today of this referral to a special committee of twenty members for the consideration of parliamentary reform, and also to present this motion. I also have the consent of the parliamentary House leaders for approving the referral, without debate, some time next week, probably

early in the week. In the circumstances, there are absolutely no snakes in the grass. This is a very frank and open approach which will make it possible for members on both sides of the House to make recommendations, while the referral also provides for interim reports under which certain changes could be tested. In any case, all this will open the door to changes that may further affect the government's policies but, above all, will make it possible for Parliament to be more efficient and more productive and to respond more satisfactorily and promptly to the present demands of modern society, where problems tend to surface more rapidly than they did in the past.

Consequently, I believe there is reason to rejoice at this approach, and I shall be speaking to this subject in greater detail later on. In concluding, I hope, with the member for Nepean-Carleton, that the policy we are discussing today will be a step toward greater parliamentary flexibility. I am convinced that in view of the present unemployment levels and the economic situation the present bill will be very useful in our society. Once more, I wish to congratulate the minister on his initiative, and I thank members on both sides of the House for their co-operation in expediting the passage of this bill at all three readings today.

• (1500)

[English]

Mr. Mark Rose (Mission-Port Moody): Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to say a few words about Bill C-114 this afternoon. Is the hon. member for Victoria-Haliburton (Mr. Scott) rising on a point of order?

Mr. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton): Mr. Speaker, I thought the hon. member for Mission-Port Moody (Mr. Rose) was rising on a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): I am sorry. We tend to focus on the center of the House all the time. It is my mistake. I did not see the hon. member rise. Usually we recognize one member from each party in the debate on an amendment, and in this case also we want to hear the opinion of each party. The hon. member for Nepean-Carleton (Mr. Baker) was recognized, followed by a member of the government. Now I will recognize the hon. member for Mission-Port Moody (Mr. Rose), followed immediately afterwards by the hon. member for Victoria-Haliburton (Mr. Scott).

Mr. Taylor: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Are we speaking on the labour bill or—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): I am sorry, I cannot recognize the hon. member when he is not in his seat.

Mr. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton): Mr. Speaker, I thought the hon. member for Mission-Port Moody was rising in response to the government House leader who strayed far from the contents of the bill we are dealing with here.