

*Adjournment Debate*

anticipated. A staffer advising claimants of the changes made by the new regulations will be inserted in mailings starting from December 29, 1985. Further instructions to follow”.

That was on December 30. I checked with the Unemployment Insurance Office in my constituency on December 30, no information was available as to whether that was retroactive or not.

We have been putting the question for months to the Minister, asking that those regulations be rescinded, unless they are not retroactive. The answer is that everything is before the Forget Commission. By golly, if you want something to be studied, let it be studied. And once a report is submitted, a response, then you should act. And I agree as to the substance of the case, that if benefits were to be paid to someone going on early retirement or not, this is a question that should be considered, and I am anxiously awaiting the Forget Commission's report.

However, while this principle is being considered, it is unfair to withdraw benefits from people who were not aware of what would happen when they took an early retirement, and it is very obvious from the letters of the companies and the statements of those involved that they were not aware of the situation. The Minister herself did not know on November 26 whether this rule would apply retroactively or not. From what we have heard when we were there, this system is penalizing people who cannot afford it and who will lose \$200 or \$300 a week while still having to pay unemployment insurance contributions. They will certainly not be able to live on their early retirement pension. They will have to go back on the labour market and to pay unemployment insurance contributions even though they can never collect.

I think that this decision is unfair and that the Canadian workers, and especially these people, did not deserve such a treatment. To my knowledge, it is the first time that such a rule is applied retroactively. In addition, when the notice of application of this rule was sent out on December 30, 1985, no instructions were provided.

Mr. Speaker, this shows that, maybe not voluntarily, but perhaps because she was badly advised, the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald) made a mistake, and the right thing for her to do would be to make an announcement and withdraw this rule, at least for those who applied before December 5 or during the fall of 1985. It is clear that these people were not aware of this rule in the fall of 1985 because they would never have taken the chance of seeing their unemployment insurance benefits withdrawn two weeks or one month later.

I hope, Mr. Speaker, that the Hon. Parliamentary Secretary will be able to announce that the Minister has come back to reason and withdrawn this rule.

• (1815)

[English]

**Mr. Joe Price (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald) has already stated on many occasions, changes to the pension income were announced on November 8, 1984, by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) in his Economic Statement.

As the House is aware, Cabinet decided on December 20, 1984, to postpone the implementation of the changes on earnings on separation to March 31, 1985, with some exemptions, and to postpone the implementation for pension income to January, 1986, without giving any other exemptions.

The amendments to the regulations dealing with pension income were approved by the Governor General in Council on December 20, 1985, and those amendments were in line with the Cabinet decision, which was to apply the new rule to all claimants in receipt of a pension income without exception.

All Canadians were informed of the coming changes through public statements and a press release. Those who were already UI recipients received a notice in late December, 1985, and early January, 1986, informing them of the changes and asking them to report their pension income on their bi-weekly reports as of January 5, 1986.

It must be noted that according to Privy Council Office rules, the content of a regulation cannot be divulged between the Department of Justice clearance and the approval by the Governor General in Council.

When the Hon. Member originally asked the question on April 17, the Minister indicated that she had referred this particular matter to the Forget Commission for consideration, that she is awaiting the results of that review and will respond in kind.

YOUNG OFFENDERS ACT—INTRODUCTION OF AMENDMENTS—  
MINISTER'S POSITION.

**Mr. Bill Attewell (Don Valley East):** Mr. Speaker, on a number of occasions I have risen in the House to share with the Solicitor General (Mr. Beatty) and other colleagues my concerns and the concerns of the residents of Don Valley East about the Young Offenders Act.

Let me first state that I am totally supportive of the basic principles and philosophy of this progressive Act. The four principles that underline this legislation are: one, that young people are responsible for their actions; two, that young people enjoy rights protected under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms; three, that society has a right to be protected from criminal behaviour; and finally, that young people have special needs because they are at various stages of development and maturity.