

Government Orders

tive effect in the communities, a snowball effect, and that is what unemployment insurance prevents.

This philosophy that if you really hurt people and cut back their benefits they will find work may be true for a very small percentage. But the great majority of Canadians want to work and they are often prevented from doing so.

If you cut back benefits through this bill and make it more difficult for people to qualify for unemployment insurance, if you cut them off sooner, what are they going to do if they still do not have a job? They are still unemployed but have no unemployment insurance. They will have to go to the welfare system. We are not going to let them starve. They will have to go to the soup kitchens, of which we have many more now than we used to have. Every community has soup kitchens.

We heard from the mayor of Vancouver and the regional municipalities of Halifax, Ottawa and Toronto. The welfare budgets in all these cities will go up if this bill passes because somebody has to take care of the unemployed if there is no unemployment insurance.

I want to again refer very briefly to the committee. In the committee we heard from 202 groups of which 157 opposed this bill. Most of the them felt that the bill should be sent back to the drawing board. There were 53 amendments presented to this House at report stage. A number of them were ruled out of order and many others were defeated. The Liberal party had presented 19 amendments to the bill. I think they were all defeated except maybe one or two.

I want to say about the process that the government imposed closure at second reading after one day and we ended up with only two half-days and one full day of debate at second reading. In the committee stage the date of October 10 was imposed, at which date the committee had to report, but we did our best in the circumstances.

At the report stage and third reading, after one day of debate the government has also imposed closure so that we got only two days at report stage and two days at third reading. Many of the amendments that I referred to, the

19 Liberal amendments and many from the New Democratic Party, were not really discussed.

I am trying to interpret how many seconds or minutes I have left.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Five seconds.

Mr. Allmand: Five seconds. That is the problem. It is very difficult to discuss all the very important points in this bill.

Let me say, in conclusion, that during the election campaign of 1988, the minister from Newfoundland, the Minister for International Trade, said that the government had no intention of touching the unemployment insurance system, that there would be no cut-backs, no amendments. He said he even confirmed this with the Prime Minister. Here is another case of broken promises by the government. It said it would not touch the unemployment insurance and now it is.

This is a savage, cruel bill. It will not solve the problems of the unemployed. It may solve the problem of the government with respect to the deficit, but it is a savage, cruel bill cutting back on benefits to the unemployed. The bill should be sent back to the drawing board in accordance with the amendment put forward by my colleague from Eglinton.

Mr. Jim Karpoff (Surrey North): Mr. Speaker, I only have 10 minutes and it is impossible to outline all of the problems in this piece of legislation in 10 minutes. I want to make a few general comments that seem to be pertinent about the bill.

One thing that we heard about on the free trade deal during last fall's election campaign was that the free trade deal would not cause an attack on our social programs. No sooner was the free trade deal implemented than we had nothing but a continual attack on social programs in Canada. The government withdrew its day care legislation. It brought in bills that have done away with the universality of old age pensions and family allowances. It started reducing our standard of health care by cutting back on transfer payments for health care.

It made a very specific promise that not only would no social programs be cut but, as the minister from Newfoundland specifically said, unemployment insurance would not be changed. Of course, we now have a bill that is gutting and eroding our unemployment insurance program. It is not coincidental. This bill is before this