

However, I agree with the Hon. Member that it is not entirely satisfactory. I remember the workers of Lapalme and those of Richelieu and I will not ask anyone to sacrifice \$10,000 to uphold the interests of someone else. And considering that it is a step in the right direction, I will support the Bill. The NDP will make its own decision and be accountable to its electors.

Mr. Champagne (Champlain): Madam Speaker, I listened carefully to the comments of my colleague from Montreal—Sainte-Marie and I was startled when I heard him say about my colleague from Hochelaga—Maisonneuve that he had not risen to defend strongly the rights of pretired workers. But, Madam Speaker, I read carefully *Hansard* for the early eighties when three oil refineries were closed. Nowhere did I read any comment by the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart) indicating that he said to the then Prime Minister: “No! I am against that, because several hundred thousand workers will be laid off”. I did not hear him say to the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Masse): “I am against that, because workers should be protected”. And today he is acting hypocritically, because he has set up a survival committee. Why did he not do so when the three other refineries were closed down? Why did he not rise as an honest man to say once for all: “No, I am against that, I want to protect the workers.” Madam Speaker, the enemy of pretired workers is the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Turner) and the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie.

Mr. Malépart: What the Hon. Member for Champlain (Mr. Champagne) is saying is stupid. It confirms . . . It so happens that I visited the ridings of Champlain and Trois-Rivières for meetings with unemployment action committees and pretired pensioners. The Hon. Member for Champlain and the Hon. Member for Trois-Rivières (Mr. Vincent) displayed what courage they had. They remained in hiding. They remained in Ottawa and sent their secretaries to defend them.

Mr. Champagne (Champlain): I rise on a point of order, Madam Speaker.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The Hon. Member for Champlain (Mr. Champagne) on a point of order.

Mr. Champagne (Champlain): Madam Speaker, what the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie is saying is completely distorted. If we did not attend, it was not because we did not want to be there. It is because we were invited at a few hours' notice, which was not the case for the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): This is a matter for debate. It is not a point of order. Very briefly, the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart).

Mr. Malépart: The Hon. Member is obviously squirming. He proves once again to be as much a disappointment as the Hon. Member for Hochelaga—Maisonneuve (Mr. Desrosiers). Old workers expect the support of the Hon. Member for

Unemployment Insurance

Champlain who deluded them into believing he would protect their interests. Unfortunately, the Hon. Member did not rise to their defence.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): Resuming debate. The Hon. Member for Cowichan—Malahat—The Islands (Mr. Manly).

• (1250)

[English]

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan—Malahat—The Islands): Madam Speaker, this travesty of a Bill, C-50, typifies the entire reason why the Government is in so much trouble. It typifies why the Government has gone down in the polls consistently over the last two and a half years. It typifies why the Government is headed for defeat in the next election.

The roots go back to November 8, 1984, when the Government thought it had a mandate from the people of Canada to do practically whatever it wanted. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) brought in an economic statement at that time through which the Government hoped to save \$120 million off the backs of Canadian working people. In the changes to regulations which were announced in that economic statement both pension income and severance pay were classified as earnings for the purpose of calculating unemployment insurance. The Government thought it was in bright days in that time and could do whatever it wanted.

Opposition to that was mounted first in the House of Commons by Members like my colleague, the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez), who saw what was happening, and then by the working people across Canada who recognized the threat which this posed to them and their livelihood. This forced the Government to delay the implementation of these provisions. The provision with regard to severance pay was delayed until March 31, 1985, and the pension provisions were delayed until January 5, 1986.

The unfairness to older workers was so obvious and evident that the Government thought that by delaying it people would become used to it and it would not be such a bitter pill to swallow. The matter was referred to the Forget Commission, but the Government refused to ask for an early recommendation. When the Forget Commission finally reported, it recommended that these provisions with regard to pension income being counted as income for the purposes of calculating unemployment insurance be dropped. However, the Government refused to act immediately on that.

The issue has been dragging on and on. The Government finally introduced a Bill in April. It is trying to blame the Opposition for the fact that it has not been dealt with, but the Government is supposed to be in charge of its own legislative timetable. Why has it not acted?

It is important that the people of Canada understand the unfairness and discrimination which was involved in the