

Unemployment Insurance Act

However, my main object today, Mr. Speaker, is to endorse the speech made last week by my hon. friend the member for Gaspé (Mr. Keays); but I want to insist on a specific point.

The minister knows that the provincial government has set up an inquiry regarding trucking in certain parts of the province. The investigator has submitted a report to the provincial government and made several recommendations. In my opinion, truckers because of their trade, are "penalized" with regard to unemployment insurance.

I have received recommendations, from an organization of truckers in my part of the country, the Société des artisans camionneurs. They complain that they are being discriminated against under the Unemployment Insurance Act, and I think they are quite right. In isolated cases, lumber companies sometimes give unemployment insurance stamps to their truckers. But when these same truckers work for another company which does not feel the need and the obligation to give them unemployment insurance stamps, those truckers, whose trucks can be considered their tools just as the saw is the tool of the carpenter—

[English]

Mr. Nicholson: I hope the hon. member will permit me to rise on a point of order in the interests of saving time. The point raised by his colleague, the hon. member for Gaspé (Mr. Keays), was a very good one, but I understand that the regulations were amended in the summer of 1966 to correct the situation that troubled him. I believe the hon. member for Gaspé is satisfied at this time. If I understood him correctly, the hon. member for Charlevoix is directing his attention to the same point.

[Translation]

Mr. Asselin (Charlevoix): I thank the minister but I must say that if the rules have been changed, they are still the same in my constituency because only last week, representatives from the Société des Artisans-camionneurs complained that certain companies were not abiding by the rules under the Unemployment Insurance Act. Such companies refuse, in many cases, to affix unemployment insurance stamps in the stamp books of people who belong to the trucking trade.

At this stage, Mr. Speaker, I am obviously forgetting the owners of scores of trucks, the heads of trucking businesses. But I am taking part in this debate to say to the minister

—what I said a while ago and will repeat now—that whenever a trucker, who earns his living with his truck, is unemployed, he is unemployed just like a carpenter or a worker. He is earning his living in a different way but I feel that even if the law has been changed, as the minister claims it was, investigations should be made about these companies to see whether the employers abide by that law.

Mr. Speaker, those were the remarks I wanted to make. I am convinced that the hon. minister will take them into consideration as he usually does. I must say he has always taken my interventions into account.

He will have to think of finding a new unemployment insurance formula. Otherwise, as several premiers requested at the federal-provincial conference on the constitution, it will be necessary to sort out our social legislation to prevent a mad scramble between the federal and provincial governments to see which of the two levels will give the most.

I think we shall have to sort out these questions of social legislation and knowing the minister's good will, I am convinced that he will take our representations into account.

[English]

Mr. Steven Otto (York East): Mr. Speaker, I am not opposed to, in fact I am in favour of this bill, but I believe that the extra contributions required under the bill will not constitute an unemployment insurance scheme. Indeed the inclusion of a great number of contributors will have little effect, apart from solving the financial problem. For the same reason I cannot see much value in the argument put forward that school teachers and doctors should not be covered by the provisions under the bill, because they will not be unemployed. Of course a great number of people will never be unemployed, so this argument should include them as well; but it does not. In any event, these extra contributions will not make the unemployment insurance scheme more effective, nor indeed will they solve our great problem, which only a true unemployment insurance scheme could do.

● (4:50 p.m.)

The very word "insurance" suggests that you are protected against something, and unemployment insurance suggests that if you lose your job you will be able to live on the benefits that are paid to you. In effect this is impossible because no family can exist, much less live, on \$36 a week. Of course, we recognize that these faults have been built into the