

Employment and Immigration

working class which, as I said earlier, is against the bill generally.

While the Unemployment Insurance Act allows the commission to claim, 36 months after the benefits have been paid, the overpayments made because the claimant did not meet all eligibility conditions that legislation does not recognize the same rights to the claimant. He has only 13 weeks to have set the beginning of the benefit period and he must find all kinds of reasons to convince UIC officials that he was justified to delay his application for benefits.

Mr. Speaker, we also object to clause 35 of the bill because it is unrealistic. That provision is detrimental to the workers who will accept a shorter work period to keep their job instead of being unemployed. However, when they are laid off because there is no more work, they suffer a loss because the calculations are based on average weekly wages. They should only take into account their ten best weeks for the purpose of calculating those qualifying weeks. It often happens in medium and small businesses that the employer, before laying off a worker, will cut down the wages and the number of hours worked.

And that is another reason why we support the motion introduced tonight by the hon. member for Témiscamingue. We could mention other sections, Mr. Speaker, such as section 36. When a claimant is not entitled to extended benefits for any working day of a period of benefits, this section of the bill should provide that the commission can subtract a fifth of the weekly amount of the benefits payable and not the whole week. What about section 38? In view of the fact that the Unemployment Insurance Act is by far the most complex legislation ever devised in a specific area, we assumed that this government would not have pretended that it was necessary, for the sake of its popularity to uphold a clause as ambiguous and mixed up as the one contained in section 30.1 of the Act.

Mr. Speaker, all my remarks and those of my colleagues as well as those of the New Democratic Party and the Social Credit Party of Canada are going to contribute something to this debate, especially to the one stemming from the motion of the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters), and I hope that the ministers will bring to the attention of the minister concerned that it is unfair, to pass this bill. I am appealing to the hon. members' and broadmindedness before concluding my remarks at this stage of the debate on Bill C-27. I only hope that the government will not take advantage of its majority to crush the expectations and legitimate demands of Canadians who are affected by this bill. The government should avail itself of this amendment which aims at delaying for 6 months the passage of this bill, to listen to and inform the public as to the consequences of the reforms and changes involved in Bill C-27.

● (2040)

[*English*]

Mr. Derek Blackburn (Brant): Mr. Speaker, I should like to thank the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) for introducing his motion to hoist or delay passage of this bill for

[Mr. Caouette (Villeneuve).]

six months. As the previous speaker mentioned, many parts of the bill are ill-advised and not relevant to the times in which we live. This point has been made by all members of the New Democratic Party who have spoken, and also by members of the Social Credit party. I do not blame the minister entirely for this, but I do blame him for one aspect of it.

● (2050)

I am particularly concerned about clauses 39 and 40 dealing, I believe, with the qualifying period; they are based on the comprehensive study of two and a half years ago when economic conditions were better and people could move more readily to another job. I cannot think of a worse time for introducing this bill than the present, and although Liberal party members may accuse us of filibustering, let me say if we do not filibuster, who will? Certainly my friends to my right will not. They are not concerned about the qualifying period. But if we were debating the gun control bill, C-51, they would rise to their feet one after the other to keep this House in session all summer. So, I suffer from no sense of guilt because my party and my good Creditiste friends are continuing the debate on this bill. It is a bad bill in most respects, and could not have been introduced at a worse time.

Before I talk on the specific provisions of the bill, let me for a moment deal with the question of our unemployed younger people. We all know that some young people do not want to work, and many employers keep repeating such hackneyed sentiments. Many who are gainfully employed in industry and paying unemployment insurance premiums are fed up with this very small group which refuses to work in any circumstances. It is simplistic to say that most or all of our young people are lazy bums who don't want to work. That is an easy argument to make, and an easy way to try to score debating points. Therefore I suggest we should consider the position of young people in our society.

I taught high school for eleven years before being elected to this House, and know that during the 1960's, because of our rising expectations, many parents advised their children to stay at school. "Stay in school," they said, "and you will get a better job, a cleaner job, a better paying job. You will be respected more, not need to carry a lunch pail, and not need to get up at 5.30 a.m. or six o'clock. You can sleep in to 7.30 or eight, teach school, go to the office or practise a profession." Mr. Speaker, I do not look back in anger. Parents in those days thought those were admirable goals for our young people, and our school system went along with them, province by province.

We channelled ever more people into the academic field, even though we had opened some vocational training schools. But there was a stigma attached to those who went to vocational and industrial schools. In small communities and large, the youngsters who went to vocational schools were looked on as second rate and third rate students and people. And ever since they have not escaped the feeling that they are second class, inferior people.