

They have largely given up looking for work. Some of them suffer, for instance, from epilepsy.

When they are laid off, possibly after working 15 or 20 years in a factory, they find it extremely difficult to get new employment. The moment they mention they are epileptic, no work is available to them. These people, like the others I have mentioned, are usually in their fifties or early sixties. I hope the minister will undertake some kind of study as soon as possible to determine whether they cannot be placed in a separate category with respect to the qualifying period or the benefit period. Their position gives rise to some of the saddest stories members hear in their constituency offices Saturday after Saturday. Of course, when people are totally disabled, other avenues of assistance are available to them.

I am hoping we can bring some humanity back into the act by adopting constructive measures of the kind I have suggested. I trust the minister will make a comment, a response or, if necessary from his point of view, a rebuttal of what I have said, because it is important that in bad economic times such as these the plight of these forgotten people should be considered by the department and by the Unemployment Insurance Commission. At the present time they are being badly pushed around. I blame the Unemployment Insurance Commission. I do not know whether they are acting deliberately or not. In any event, the people to whom I have referred are finding things extremely difficult. They are sloughed off from unemployment insurance benefits after 20 weeks and then find they must resort to welfare.

I emphasize that they are not receiving compensation or other benefits from retirement or pre-retirement plans. Changes in the act along the lines I have put forward would make these people feel they are still part of the community and are not being neglected after working so many years and contributing to the fund. I hope the minister will take my suggestion seriously when he replies. May I call it one o'clock?

At one o'clock the House took recess.

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 2 p.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[English]

THE MINISTRY

ALLEGATION OF ATTEMPT TO DILUTE DOCTRINE OF MINISTERIAL RESPONSIBILITY—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, under the provisions of Standing Order 43, I want to move a motion of urgent and pressing necessity arising from the revelation during parliamentary debate on the police break-in

Statutory Holidays

at L'Agence de Presse Libre du Québec of a new and sinister concept of ministerial responsibility, which is in contradiction with most authorities on the subject of cabinet government and which may dangerously erode the operation of our parliamentary system as we know it. Therefore, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Parry Sound-Muskoka (Mr. Darling):

That this House deplores the attempt by this government to dilute the doctrine of ministerial responsibility, and calls upon the Prime Minister, at the earliest opportunity, to reaffirm the principle that ministers are responsible to this parliament for the actions of their subordinates.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Speaker: Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 43, presentation for debate of any such motion requires the unanimous consent of the House. Is there such unanimous consent?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

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SAINT-JEAN BAPTISTE DAY

CONGRATULATIONS TO FRENCH CANADIANS—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity under Standing Order 43 which I genuinely believe will receive the unanimous support of the House.

[Translation]

Considering that a week before the festivities related to Confederation one of the founding cultures of the country celebrates its Saint-Jean Baptiste Day, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles):

That this House wish a happy celebration to all French Canadians of the country.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Pursuant to Standing Order 43, I already refused in the past to put such motions concerning congratulations or messages because I feel it is dangerous to encourage the presentation of such motions pursuant to Standing Order 43.

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[English]

STATUTORY HOLIDAYS

REQUEST FOR EARLY PASSAGE OF BILL C-30—MOTION UNDER S.O. 43

Mr. Hal Herbert (Vaudreuil): Mr. Speaker, I rise under the provisions of Standing Order 43 on a matter of urgent and pressing necessity. In order to encourage the unity of our two founding cultures on this eve of the celebration of Saint-Jean Baptiste Day, I move, seconded by the hon. member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia):