

Unemployment Insurance Act

program. It has, in effect, become a tax. That is what it is, and I wish the minister would cut out all this flim-flammy. If he is going to tax the people and take back so much from them through income tax, why does he not come right out and say it? Why is he playing all these "here we go around the mulberry bush" games? In the harshest language I can think of, the minister is perpetrating grand larceny.

● (1602)

This government should be taken on the carpet for this. It is saying to people that they must come in, they must belong and they cannot escape. Unemployment insurance premiums are compulsory. They are deducted at source. That is not a matter of choice. People pay premiums thinking they will receive maximum benefits related to the amount of money they pay per \$100 of insured earnings. Lo and behold, when the time comes to collect, there is the minister with his hat trying to collect \$9 million. He is stealing \$9 million from Canadians, and I wish he would come clean and tell the Canadian people that that is exactly what he is doing.

We have said in a very serious way that the overrun in the unemployment insurance program does not exist on the employer and employee account. What employers and employees pay carries the program for what it was designed to do. The overrun on the program is carried on the government account. Last year that overrun was \$1.8 billion. That was the accumulated deficit on the government account, and that is where the minister is having difficulty. That money comes from the coffers of the country directly. It is costing the government. The minister wants to indulge in some fiscal legerdemain and slip this over to the employer and employee side of the ledger sheet so that he will look good in the eyes of the public. Here is a tough minister. Look how tough he is. He has really cracked down on the unemployment insurance program.

An hon. Member: He is not tough; he is nasty.

Mr. Rodriguez: The minister does not talk tough, he talks nasty, and in light of some of the quotes I read into the record, his mouth should be washed with soap. Back in the old country where I come from my mother would wash my mouth with soap if I used the language this minister of the Crown used. It was a totally shameful display. He used such words as "bloody" and "hell". I think that is disgraceful. He may think that is flamboyant language, but the people of Nickel Belt do not think that at all.

Mr. Symes: Those genteel miners.

Mr. Rodriguez: We think the minister is blustering. If he is trying to speak to the people of Nickel Belt, he should speak more clearly. His language is certainly not becoming.

In conclusion—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rodriguez: I see that Liberal backbenchers now have the claps.

I think we have put forward an admirable proposal. We have said that clause 1 should be deleted. Hopefully that would result in the deletion of clause 4. As a matter of fact, we are hoping that we can extrapolate the plausibility of our proposal to the whole bloody bill.

Some hon. Members: Shame!

Mr. Dawson: Soap!

Mr. Rodriguez: Oh, pardon me.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. I suggest that the hon. member watch his language in this House.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I listened to your reprimand and I know that, being an old railroader, you will certainly understand that my language was most intemperate.

We are suggesting that clause 1 should be deleted. In all the hearings of the committee the minister accepted none of the propositions put forward by the opposition—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. I regret to inform the hon. member that his allotted time has expired. He may continue with the unanimous consent of the House.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Bill Clarke (Vancouver Quadra): Mr. Speaker, today is just like last week in the committee. The hon. member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez) has again used all his time. There were about 34 committee meetings over the last few weeks, during which time I was afraid that I might end up being brainwashed by the hon. member for Nickel Belt.

Mr. Rodriguez: No problem with that.

Mr. Clarke: It took a great deal of adherence to my principles to avoid having some of his garbage rub off. The hon. member for Nickel Belt spoke about garbage coming from members from other corners of the House in the committee, but there was a full share of unmitigated garbage coming from the dreamers on my left, who seem to think that this country does not need any taxpayers. They seem to think that all we need is unemployment insurance beneficiaries.

If there were any provisions in this bill which might have the effect of cutting anyone's benefits, we would be sure to hear from the hon. member for Nickel Belt or one of his rotating army of colleagues who came into the committee to keep us amused. It was interesting that when the time came for the committee's procedures finally to wind down, the hon. member for Nickel Belt sat there by himself and exercised his vote. His rotating army had taken off for greener fields or dreamier pastures. I do not know where they went.

An hon. Member: We are entitled to only one vote.