

ILAP program were finally successful. I was able to see some of my long-standing fellow employees benefit from that program. While I was happy to see my fellow employees being recipients of that program, I was more than a little surprised to learn that they would be the last people in western Canada so to benefit.

When I read this Bill, an Act to amend the Department of Labour Act, I realize that it has been three years since the Government made a commitment to introduce this legislation. I have come to realize what the term "Progressive Conservative" really means, especially considering that under the former labour adjustment program, the cost was some \$50 million a year, and under this program, it is to be \$42 million a year, five years later. That is inverse progress. I suppose that is progress in a conservative way or even worse than a conservative way. Perhaps there is some logic to the way the Government operates after all.

The answers that I gather my colleagues received between 1984 and 1988 were that the program was under consideration, under active consideration or would be coming soon. I could not help but think of a phrase that is used in a British television program entitled *Yes, Minister*. Some Hon. Members who have had the good fortune to watch that program from time to time will remember certain definitions. "Under consideration" means they have lost the file. "Under active consideration" means they have lost it but they are looking for it. They lost it and they looked for it and it took them three years to put this together.

We welcome the fact that retroactively, we will receive some benefits, for a limited number of people, even though they are not as good. At least it is some progress over the vacuum there was during that three or four year period. But what did it take the Government three years to produce? I would like to read the Bill into the record so that those who read *Hansard* will know exactly what it took three year's work to accomplish. The Act to amend the Department of Labour Act reads:

Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada, enacts as follows:

1. The Department of Labour Act is amended by adding thereto the following section:

### *Labour*

"5 (1) Subject to the approval of the Governor in Council, the Minister may enter into agreements with provincial governments, employers, employer organizations, employees, employee organizations, financial institutions or such other persons or entities as the Minister considers appropriate, for the purpose of making provision for periodic income assistance payments to

(a) former employees at an establishment whose employment has been terminated at any time since December 31, 1987, by reason of a permanent reduction in the work force engaged in an identifiable economic activity at the establishment and who, at the time of the termination, were fifty-five years of age or more but less than sixty-five years of age; or

(b) former employees at an establishment in an industry that was a designated industry on August 12, 1986 whose employment has been terminated, at any time since the industry ceased to be a designated industry, by reason of a permanent reduction in the work force engaged in an identifiable economic activity at the establishment and who, at the time of termination, were fifty-five years of age or more but less than sixty-five years of age or, in the case of a reduction taking effect before October 6, 1988, were persons less than sixty-five years of age the sum of whose age and length of service in designated industries was not less than eighty years.

(2) In paragraph (1)(b), "designated industry" means an industry designated pursuant to section 3 of the Labour Adjustments Benefits Act".

That is all. That is what took three years of consideration, active consideration and study. Even so, there is only agreement in principle, not in any detailed way, of eight of the ten provinces, and the two richest provinces, Ontario and British Columbia, still have not even agreed in principle to this little Bill.

No wonder the Government has problems measuring productivity. I would not want to call this an elephant. It is more like a mouse, but it had the gestation period of an elephant or something very close to it. It really makes me wonder what the Department of Labour has been doing in the last three to four years. Is this the kind of priority that working people across Canada can expect from a Progressive Conservative Government? Is this the definition of urgency that we can expect from the Government? Is this what older working Canadians can expect from the Government? It does boggle the mind.

Admittedly, the previous labour adjustment program only applied to certain industries; textiles, footwear, tanning and clothing. Not only in the ridings of British Columbia but in other ridings in central and eastern Canada were we able to get specific area designations as well so that senior workers could benefit from the