

Unemployment Insurance Act

Mr. Speaker: It is agreed and so ordered that speeches about to be made on the third reading of Bill C-14 shall not be more than 20 minutes in duration.

Mr. Fred McCain (Carleton-Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, probably few bills have been more controversial than the one which we are presently discussing. It touches the heart strings of the members of this House who have consideration for their fellow man while at the same time having respect for the capability of our society to do all those things we might want to do.

It is because of the restrictions which have been placed upon the capability of government to fulfil its promises of 1971 that it has found itself in a very penurious position and has been compelled therefore to bring in amendments which would offer another opportunity to practise constraint.

This is laudable, I agree; the purpose is long since past due. However, it is the method of application of the objective which is objectionable. It has been introduced in a fashion and in an environment which is unacceptable. The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has set himself up as the great unifier of this country. He has suggested that the federal and provincial governments should form a co-operative confederation type of structure. Yet this bill has been brought in without consultation with the provinces regarding the impact it might have on provincial treasuries. It is evident, therefore, that the Prime Minister and the government are devoid of sincerity in their advocacy of a federal-provincial co-operation structure. Their actions denounce and contradict their own ideology.

● (1212)

There is a multitude of hidden factors which I believe we should consider at this time. First of all, objection was raised to this bill by many supporters of the government both on the front benches and on the back benches. I wonder what has been done to silence those objections? For instance, what happened to the objection of the hon. member for South Western Nova (Miss Campbell)? She made a speech indicating that she in no way supported the bill as introduced. Her speech was a condemnation of the government and its approach to the subject. The hon. member for Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe (Mr. Faour) made statements outside the House condemning the government without qualification for the lack of consideration which this policy extends to his province of Newfoundland. The hon. member for Grand Falls-White Bay-Labrador (Mr. Rompkey) was equally disappointed by the behaviour of the government, and as we sat in this chamber last night and watched those dissenters brought back to the fold we could not help wondering what price was paid, what promises were made and what pot will be opened to fulfil the demands of these people in their own constituencies.

Who should be the spokesman, Mr. Speaker, for Nova Scotia? Who should best understand its needs? Who should be the spokesman for Newfoundland and for Atlantic Canada in general? There are two groups which are obviously best qualified; they are the members elected to the House of Commons along with the premiers and elected members in the provincial

[Mr. Beaudoin.]

legislatures. It is not the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Cullen) acting in a unilateral way.

In view of the objection expressed by the hon. member for Northumberland-Miramichi (Mr. Dionne), who is the chairman of the Atlantic caucus, we cannot help wondering on this side what plums were passed along to satisfy the objectors. I say this because last night it was very obvious they had been whipped into line and were voting against the best interests of their constituents. Is it a continuation of the discrimination which has been exercised in the allocation of funds for the Canada Works program? The last time that program was examined—and it has been examined several times—it was found that Liberal members of the House of Commons were receiving \$600,000 to \$900,000 per constituency more than opposition members were receiving, regardless of party affiliation. This is a deplorable and despicable practice because people all across Canada where unemployment is high are entitled to equal consideration. The government has ignored the needs of Canada but has recognized the needs of Liberal members and their constituencies.

To what extent will this pork barrelling be permitted to go? There is certainly evidence from the past behaviour of the government that the DREE program in its various aspects has been used for political purposes. Assistance under this program can be granted to the provinces to aid their economic expansion, but under the dictates of the minister in charge of the program or of the minister representing a particular province.

I have complained about this situation for a long time. One would imagine that moneys granted to a province to assist its economic expansion would be administered by the provincial government as being closest to the scene and knowing more about the need. But this is not to be the case. Before the moneys are released by Ottawa the planning and the location of the expenditure is arranged between the Government of Canada and the individual provinces concerned, without too much consideration being given to the specific needs of the province. Is this use of DREE money to be expanded into a political pork barrel to the detriment of the country as a whole but to the benefit of individual members and individual constituencies? This, we must consider, is what is going to happen. The Canada Works program, as I mentioned, has been loaded in favour of Liberal members. Liberal members of this House are very often inclined to contradict remarks made from this side but I notice there is complete silence on this occasion in recognition of a statement of truth as delivered to them.

Mr. Maine: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. The hon. member for Carleton-Charlotte (Mr. McCain) has made an incorrect statement. I am sure he does not want to mislead the House by saying that the Canada Works program is loaded in favour of certain constituencies. Grants are made under a formula of which I am sure he is aware, and that formula is geared to unemployment rate. His statement is misleading the House completely.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, please. What the parliamentary secretary is trying to say could be said when he contrib-