

Why do we have member after member on this side speaking, but no one on the other side? I can only assume that they have not managed to clear the hurdles and get their speeches approved. Yes, there were one or two over there who did manage to slip through, which only means that they have had their opinions vetted.

An hon. Member: That is only done on the Tory side.

Mr. Parker: No, it does not happen here—we have caucus meetings.

The amendments which our party has proposed—and I do not mean in detail but in broad outline—include the idea of extra penalties for those who bring their own misfortunes on themselves, those who quit. Surely there is something wrong with an insurance plan which pays someone to burn down his own house, and that is what we have with someone who quits his job and collects benefits on the same basis as someone who loses it for some other reason. Surely there is something wrong with a system which provides that kind of protection. Our proposal is to remove it.

There are other ways of penalizing those who quit, and we do not insist on our plan; we simply suggest that that idea should be included in the bill and that the idea of a two-tier system should be included. But the government consistently refuses to consider it. There is no logic to that. They do not want to be confused with the facts, they do not want to examine, not only what this party says, but what every province of Canada says, what the experience of the private sector says, what economic studies say, what the Economic Council of Canada has suggested, what, in private conversations, members in their own department will say. The weight of opinion is clearly against them. They are going madly into the sunset saying, “our way or no way at all.”

If I were to take purely partisan advantage of that, I suppose I should stand here and be delighted because six months from now when we have an election campaign and we are on the hustings talking about what this government has done over the last session of parliament and we say that here was a chance not only to save more money than the government plan proposed but also to protect Canadians in a better and more effective way, and that we proposed that way, we would be elected on that basis. We are not insisting on the details and that it must be done in our way. If the government wishes to change the benefit periods or change the percentages in benefits, that is fine. We are merely saying to it that our amendments, taken as a whole, save more money and protect more humanely. Yet ministers refuse to consider them. On a purely partisan basis, I think that will be an advantage to members on this side six months from now because it shows this government to be pigheaded, obstinate, cruel, and incompetent in terms of management.

I can stand here tonight—and of course I am not a partisan man, Mr. Speaker—and suggest that I do not want them to give us that opportunity. I would like them to take this opportunity away from us and admit that they are not the only ones who have ideas, that there may be a better way of doing it, and that we have done everything short of ramming it down

Unemployment Insurance Act

their throats to demonstrate that there are better ideas in this case.

Our amendments are on paper. The government has an opportunity to add amendments of its own and to withdraw the closure motion. If it does not do so in the next couple of days, we will do it after the next election. The government's obstinacy on this bill is leading this party and, more important than that, is showing the entire country a much clearer picture of what this government stands for, Mr. Speaker. For the last six months the government has been floundering around for ways in which it can skip its way through the obstacles and manage to cling on to power in the next election. If ministers want to do it, I think the best way to do it is to indicate that there is some responsiveness over there to fulfil the real needs of Canadians, and if, on the other hand, they are interested in sitting on this House, then they are taking exactly the right course, and while I cannot applaud on behalf of the people of Canada, if I were a partisan individual I would certainly applaud on behalf of the Conservative party.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, I want to say a few words on this motion in response to some of the arguments that have been made. I was very interested in hearing the hon. member for Rosedale (Mr. Crombie) talk earlier about the fact that this bill is going to put a lot of extra burden on the municipalities and the provinces. Of course he is absolutely right because of the fact that we are cutting back in this legislation on unemployment insurance by 10 per cent, which means that a lot of people will have to go on welfare and draw social security who have not drawn it before.

● (2112)

The only thing that puzzles me is that, even though he made a tremendous speech, other people in his party for the last couple of years have been advocating to the government across the way more restraints and cutbacks. Even the hon. member who is the critic and spokesman for the Conservative party, and I assume he would be sitting as a minister if they happened to win, the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra (Mr. Clarke), said, if I remember correctly, that the bill does not go far enough in terms of cutbacks, but was a step in the right direction. I have to assume that member is a credible member and was speaking for his party. I think the hon. member for Rosedale ought to take him out behind the barn and teach him a lesson or two about what a bill like this does to the municipalities and provinces in our country.

The other thing I find passing strange when I look to my right and see the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald) and the hon. member for Egmont (Mr. MacDonald), the so-called progressives of that party—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Nystrom: I say “so-called” because the more I see them the more I am convinced that they stand there with the hon. member for Leeds (Mr. Cossitt), the hon. member for York-Simcoe (Mr. Stevens), the hon. member for Vancouver Quadra and others. I recall, when the family allowance meas-