

Unemployment Insurance Act

It would mean that I had worked at a job and paid my contributions so I was entitled to unemployment insurance. That was my right because I had paid the premiums. No one goes out and bangs up his car because he has car insurance. Perhaps I should not say that nobody does it because there is always a nut somewhere who will park his car on a dangerous corner and wait three or four hours knowing that eventually somebody will run into the car and he will get whatever had been wrong with the car previously fixed up. There are exceptions to everything. Doctors cheat, lawyers cheat, and workers cheat, but that does not mean that all workers, all doctors, or all lawyers cheat. There are just some who do, and we have to look after those exceptions, but we should not abuse the whole system for them.

As I was saying, before the Liberal government bought the computer system and the high-priced help—they decided they must have a means to check the help they had hired the day before—one would go into the employment office and, if they had a job, one would take it, but if there was no job available for you, then they would mark it on their slip and you could go over to the unemployment insurance side where you presented the card which had the record of your contributions on it, then they gave you the cash and you went away looking for a job. When you found a job, you started again making contributions which were then marked on the card. If you thought you did not get enough money, they would show you your card and you could add up your contributions yourself or you could have your lawyer or accountant look after it. Now it is so complicated that we do not really know whether or not people are honest in collecting unemployment insurance.

It is very easy for the minister to say, as he said in a discussion in which I was involved, that he anticipated people would move. I do not expect a Liberal government to be always in office. The last time it stayed 20 years. Now it has been in office long enough and it should go. I expect some change after the next election, and when it comes about I anticipate—perhaps I am a born optimist—that things will be better and that more jobs will be available, especially in northern Ontario, in my riding, where the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion (Mr. Lessard) has spent \$2.5 million looking for minerals. If they find any minerals, I expect some mines will be opened, and if they are, I want those young people, not those living in Toronto but those living in Timiskaming to get those jobs—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but the time allotted to him has expired. Is there agreement to allow the hon. member to continue?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Some hon. Members: No.

Mr. Johnston (Westmount): Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I take exception to the statement made by the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters).

An hon. Member: That is not a point of order.

[Mr. Peters.]

Mr. Johnston (Westmount): The statement was made that doctors cheat and lawyers cheat. I do not think that is a parliamentary comment. He went on to say that not all doctors cheat and not all lawyers cheat. I would like to correct the record—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. That is not a point of order, it is a point of debate, and if the hon. member wishes to get into the debate, I will recognize him later on.

Mr. Fouse Faour (Humber-St. George's-St. Barbe): Mr. Speaker, before I start my comments on the bill I should like to tell hon. members about the education which this whole process has been for me in the last few weeks. The process to which I refer is the legislative process which this bill has gone through from second reading in the House through the committee stage.

In my naivete as a new member I approached consideration of the bill in committee with a fair degree of optimism, thinking that we would find in the committee a considerable amount of co-operation on the part of the government to get to the nub of the problem of unemployment insurance and of unemployment, and a willingness on the part of the government to accept suggestions and amendments to its proposals in the legislation.

We heard from the minister himself that this piece of legislation is not the end-all and the be-all, that the bill is not perfect and that it is expected it will be revised in the future because it does not provide the whole answer at this time. Since that is the case, I was quite taken aback, I must say, when I found out that the government seemed completely unwilling at the committee stage not only to accept suggestions for changes in the legislation but even unwilling to listen to the witnesses and to accept the proposal that more witnesses appear before the committee.

The distinct impression I had of the attitude of the government was the attitude which I had observed in some circles before, that is, "My mind is made up, so don't confuse me with the facts". That was the attitude that came across to me as a freshman member of the House, and that is before being tainted with all the prejudices which members normally acquire with time in the House.

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At first I was astounded to find that the government did not wish to listen to many groups and individuals who are concerned about the impact this bill will have upon them. At least 35 groups and individuals wished to appear before the committee to state their case. They wanted to state their view on the proposed changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act and to offer suggestions as to how the problems presented by the government could be better met and solved than by the legislation before us.

The minister stated a willingness to listen to suggestions. He stated that the legislation certainly was not perfect and would suffer revisions over the next few years. In spite of that