

*Government Orders*

the terms and conditions respecting wages or salary, just cause; excessive overtime work or refusal to pay for overtime work—the employer is at fault and the employee refuses to tolerate the situation—just cause; significant changes in work duties, a reason recognized as just cause; antagonistic relations between an employee and a supervisor for which the employee is not primarily responsible, a reason recognized as just cause in case of voluntary quitting; practices of an employer that are contrary to law, just cause; discrimination with regard to employment because of membership in any association, organization or union of workers, a reason recognized as just cause in case of voluntary quitting; undue pressure by an employer on employees to leave their employment, just cause; such other reasonable circumstances as are prescribed. That is the thirteenth reason, the one that allows us, on the basis of current and future jurisprudence, to identify new, valid reasons without having to go back to Parliament and introduce new legislation.

• (1605)

Employment and Immigration Canada will be able to adopt regulations relating to the concept of just cause for voluntary quitting to maximize fairness to claimants.

The benefit of the doubt is a genuine consideration and Employment and Immigration Canada will give claimants the benefit of the doubt. Usually the people who make the decisions are able to draw sensible conclusions from circumstances, evidence and other relevant factors in favour of one of the parties. Considering that we have a system that has been in existence for 40 years and considering the experience of the people who work at Employment and Immigration Canada, I think there can be no doubt about their competence in this respect.

Claimants will be given the benefit of the doubt in cases when contradictory or equivalent evidence is submitted and, as a result, the evidence does not support one party rather than the other. In such case the benefit of the doubt will go to the claimant. In other words, the decision will be in the claimant's favour. This means that when the unemployment insurance officer, as prescribed by law, receives the employee's and employer's version of the facts and is unable to make a decision on the basis

of these statements, the benefit of the doubt will go to the claimant.

In conclusion, I must say that Bill C-113 and all similar bills are never a matter of rejoicing for the government. However, with a debt of \$400 billion, a deficit of \$34.5 billion and an anticipated deficit of \$8.5 billion in the unemployment insurance account we must act now, the government must make certain decisions and act responsibly, which is what Canadians want us to do. That is what this government is doing and has done since it came into office. That is what we will keep on doing as long as we have a mandate from the people of this country. I am sure Canadians will appreciate our responsible attitude and our sense of fairness, all of which is in the best interests of the people of this country.

[English]

**Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North):** Madam Speaker, Bill C-113, the bill we are discussing today, arrives at the third reading stage after an exceptionally rocky ride.

We all remember the angry reactions of Canadians when they first heard of these changes in the government's economic statement last year. We all remember the protesters who invaded the riding offices of government members from Quebec and threw the furniture from those offices into the street. Despite this anger the government has demonstrated insensitivity and arrogance in its attempt to sell these changes to Canadians.

Who can forget the employment minister saying that it was time the government had—I will not use the words that he used because they are unparliamentary—to face facts and get tough with people who quit their jobs to freeloader off the UI system? There was also a suggestion that UI recipients should be proud to sacrifice some of their benefits in order to help control the deficit. Who will ever forget such ludicrous ideas as the 1-800 UI snitch hotline, the UI police squad or the claim that the February 7 demonstration in Montreal was a separatist set-up?

• (1610)

The government paid for its incompetent handling of this issue. The former deputy minister of employment and immigration was demoted and transferred to the Department of Supply and Services. The government had to deal with a revolt in its Quebec caucus. Finally, the minister backed down and introduced a new bill, Bill C-113, in an effort to disguise the changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act that attracted so much scorn across the country.