

Statements by Ministers

painful costs that death has, not only in relation to the issue of productivity, which the Minister raises in his statement, but to the issue of its human toll on families, particularly children and spouses.

There is, however, another question for which the Government has to answer. Given the statistics just cited by the Minister, and given the fact that the battle against death in the workplace has not yet been won—it is far from being won—why is it that the Government is reducing the Budget of the Canada centre for occupational health and safety? In the last Budget of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), we saw a 10 per cent reduction, and there is a further 10 per cent reduction projected. At the same time, as a result of these cutbacks, the Government has abolished the quality of working life program, and it has abolished the collection of data with respect to wages and working conditions in all businesses across the country which do not have the benefit of organized labour.

It is important to note that this measure today was not called by the Government but by the Canadian Labour Congress. I laud the Canadian Labour Congress for doing so.

The Government has a responsibility to the workers organized and unorganized. It is now abolishing the quality of working life centre, and the statistics which gave a chance to every Canadian to understand what was happening with salary and working conditions in every establishment in Canada, along with the cutbacks in the Centre for Occupational Health and Safety, reflect this Government's lack of commitment to the working people. Even the Neilsen Task Force points out that at present the centre has not been in a position to do research but only to provide information. Part of the reason is that of budgetary restraints, and the further budgetary restraints being imposed by the Government to the tune of a potential 20 per cent cutback will mean further deaths and injury in the workplace.

● (1110)

Mr. Rod Murphy (Churchill): Mr. Speaker, I, too, am pleased to have an opportunity to speak on this matter. I would like to first congratulate the CLC for initiating this day of mourning. I think it is long past the time that Canadians recognize the contributions and sacrifices in life and limb made by workers in helping to develop our country. However, it is not enough to hear words on this matter spoken in the House of Commons. The plight of workers, whether they be in mines, forests, offices or banks, is something about which we should all be concerned. The Government should be concerned, not only through its words but through its actions.

The Hon. Member who just spoke indicated that at a time when we are concerned about chemicals in the workplace, and death and injury to workers, the Government is cutting back funding to the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. Last week, in front of the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration, officials from that agency indicated that they had more requests for information

this year than last year. They could not meet the requests that were made last year, yet their funding is being cut back.

The Minister, in his remarks, mentioned that we passed changes to Part IV of the Canada Labour Code. That was two years ago and the regulations are finally in place. However, the Government has not acted on all the changes we made. One of the very significant omissions was the failure to establish an advisory council on occupational health and safety as required by the legislation. At a time when Canadians are so concerned about health in the workplace, that is one step the Government could have taken. It is not a very expensive measure, but it is very important in making sure that management and labour have a chance to give the Government direction towards saving lives.

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PETITIONS

DEINDEXATION OF CANADIAN FORCES SUPERANNUATION BENEFITS—USE OF PENSION INCOME IN CALCULATION OF UI BENEFITS

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I have a number of petitions, the first of which is from the great Province of Alberta. Whereas any amendment of the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act to remove indexation of annuities will adversely affect former members of Canada's Armed Forces, widows and dependents. Whereas the Government has shown its intention to amend the Canadian Forces Superannuation Act without first consulting with annuity recipients and those—

Mr. Speaker: The Hon. Member has several petitions. I think she knows our practice is to give a summary and just the prayer, not all the preamble. I am perfectly happy to have the Hon. Member present her petitions, of course.

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, these former members of the Armed Forces from the Province of Alberta are angry with the Government because of its decision to move ahead with deindexation of their pensions. The petition of the undersigned residents who now avail themselves of their ancient and undoubted right thus to present a grievance common to your petitioners, ably states their complaints and grievances.

I have another petition from Victoria, British Columbia, signed by several dozen former servicemen who also call upon the Government to refrain from any action with respect to superannuation and unemployment insurance without consulting with those who have paid into the funds.

I have a further petition from Victoria, British Columbia, again from former servicemen and women who ask the Government not to implement changes to the unemployment insurance regulations which pertain to the inclusion of pension income as earnings. There are several hundred signatures on this petition.