

### *Government Orders*

have never even had a first job, and for those who have their introduction to the labour force is often a waste of their skills.

• (1120)

I read recently about a 23-year old—with an English degree who sells plastic dinosaurs and colouring books in a children's shop. She earns \$7 an hour and is struggling to make ends meet. One of her former class-mates is slightly worse off. He is putting his education to use behind the deli counter in a supermarket.

These are the kinds of jobs reserved for the best and the brightest coming out of our universities. These are the kinds of jobs that the minister of employment is encouraging our youth to hold onto with this bill. Young people are caught in a vicious circle. They want to go to university to improve their employment prospects but in order to finance their education they are forced to find work.

An increasing number of young Canadians are finding it difficult to get a post-secondary education. Tuition fees have increased 58 per cent over the past 5 years. The price of books has more than kept pace with inflation and living expenses continue to rise. Many university students must alternate between work periods and school in order to get an education. The entry level jobs they find are often low paying, have little if any responsibility and are not very challenging. Often the only way for these young workers to advance themselves is by moving from job to job as they acquire experience.

Bill C-113 discourages that upward mobility and will have a dampening effect on youthful ambition. I, for one, do not think that is good for our society.

We need our young people to lead the way into the new economy. They must be encouraged to advance, not stand still. Canada will never be a leader in the global marketplace if it is a nation reliant on low paying, part-time jobs. We need highly skilled, highly paid jobs to lead the way to the 21st century.

In conclusion, I would like to summarize why I believe this is a bad bill. First, it is too arbitrary. Despite the

pious promises of the minister of employment, his minister of state and other members of the government side this bill does not provide the necessary protection for workers. By its absolute black and white nature this bill puts the onus of proof on the person claiming UI benefits, withholding those benefits until the person's credibility has been established.

It has been said before that this reverses one of the oldest and most cherished principles of our democratic system, which is that a person is innocent until proven guilty.

I also believe that this is a bad bill because it will not accomplish what it is designed to do. The bill's savings of \$2.5 billion will not make a dent in the UI fund deficit of \$7.6 billion. If the government is serious about controlling its spending why does it not cancel or scale down its plan to spend \$4.4 billion on a submarine-hunting helicopter fleet? If the government is serious about wanting to put its financial house in order why does it not go after the \$16.1 billion that Canadian companies have hidden in tax havens in Barbados, Cyprus and elsewhere?

This government has no clear plan for controlling its spending, and now the most vulnerable Canadians are being forced to pay for its economic mismanagement. That, in a sense, is the greatest failing of this proposed legislation.

Bill C-113, like Bill C-105 before it, reveals this government's glaring lack of vision. In this time of economic hardship the government could have proposed measures to help the unemployed find work, help young people break into the job market, or help high school drop-outs and others get skills training.

Instead the government chose to tinker on the sidelines. If it believes it wants to overhaul the UI system, if it wants to come out with a new innovative UI reform package, then it should present a serious approach toward this issue. This bill is a hesitant half measure which does nothing to address Canada's unemployment crisis.