

Government Orders

I will explain what happens. There are many women who have gone through a period of supporting their families, often on their own, often living on welfare after the break-up of a marriage. They start working themselves out of that situation, go through a period of re-education and retraining and get back into the work force. What they are mostly lacking is confidence. It takes them a while to get back into the work force and build up their confidence.

They are often working in small places where there is not a union, there is not a system that tells them that they do not have to put up with harassment. They are being harassed.

Now, if people have just started a new job and have not been in the work force for ten years they have lost a lot of their confidence. They are not going to turn around to the person who is harassing them, to their boss, and confront them on it. They are simply not going to do that. They are just going to feel humiliated, belittled, and demeaned, and they are going to walk off the job. Then they are not going to qualify for unemployment insurance.

Most women who find themselves in that position will not have read the Canadian Human Rights Act. They will not know the rules they have to follow until afterwards, when it is too late. Other people who find themselves working in unhealthy and unsafe conditions, who are required sometimes to handle dangerous chemicals or work in an environment in which their health is threatened, are not necessarily going to know what bureaucratic steps they have to take to satisfy some person in the Department of Employment and Immigration that they really had no choice but to quit that job.

They are going to leave, and so they should because no worker in this country should have to put up with working in unsafe conditions.

That is what is wrong with this bill. It does not recognize unemployment insurance as a system that people have contributed to throughout their working lives and from which they are entitled to draw when they need it.

It is an attitude that says: Punish people if they are not prepared to work under any conditions, for any wage, for any employer.

My colleague mentioned that a booklet has been prepared by the people who work for Employment and Immigration Canada. These are the people on the front lines who deal with desperate men who have lost their job and do not have the money to feed their children or pay the rent, who suddenly run into a morass of rules and regulations that says that they are not going to have any money for weeks and weeks and weeks and how they get along is none of the bureaucracy's concern.

The people who work day to day and hear the stories of the women who are out of a job, cannot get training, and even in our own government are told that they must have a grade 12 education or they cannot have the minimum unskilled job in the Government of Canada, have now been told they cannot distribute these helpful hints to their clients.

This is typical of the other section of the bill, which has been less debated. It says to all Public Service employees, whether they are earning \$18,000 or \$160,000, that there is no increase for them next year.

We are not going to solve the problems of this country by confronting, blaming, or victimizing other Canadians. We are going to solve the problems of this country by working together, and that includes working with our employees, sitting down and asking them to give us their ideas on how the Government of Canada can operate more efficiently and how we can better serve their clients.

• (1555)

What does this government do? It says that they are to blame. The entire federal Public Service costs us 5.6 per cent of the national budget, but on their backs we are going to solve all the economic woes of the country. We are not going to let them be helpful to their clients. This kind of measure, looking after those who are doing well and punishing those who are having a hard time, is not the way to solve the problems of the country. This bill is typical of that approach and that is why I am against it and that is why we are against it on this side of the House.

Mr. Raymond Skelly (North Island—Powell River): Mr. Speaker, one of the main issues in this matter before us is the question of whether somebody who is forced out of unemployment insurance will have a fair hearing.