

Government Orders

The bill also provides for private hearings and the possibility for a victim of sexual or other harassment to testify without the person who harassed him or her being present. This will help create a better environment for putting a victim at ease and thus encourage the reporting of these unacceptable acts.

It is surprising that the member for Timmins—Chapleau tabled an amendment at report stage that would not allow hearing the testimony of a harasser unless the victim was present.

I think that our bill allows the chairperson of the Unemployment Insurance Arbitration Tribunal, in hearing testimony from the victim or the harasser, not to expose the victim to the harasser's testimony, since the person has already suffered harassment.

The bill also imposes a more objective process for deciding on eligibility, requiring officers of Employment and Immigration Canada to obtain and consider the employee's and employer's versions in rendering a decision.

The commitments made by the minister, Mr. Valcourt, on training programs for the personnel of Employment and Immigration Canada who have to deal with cases of sexual harassment must not be minimized either.

• (1600)

Consider the following breakdown of staff at Employment and Immigration Canada: 85 per cent of front-line officers are women; 71 per cent of tier two officers are women; 63 per cent of claimant services officers are women; 87 per cent of reception and information clerks are women; 64 per cent of supervisors in Canada Employment Centres are women. Together with the training these women have received, this is one more guarantee for individuals who have suffered sexual or other harassment that they can expect to be treated fairly, to the extent that the circumstances of this harassment are recognized as a valid reason for quitting and for receiving unemployment insurance benefits.

Canadians are constantly asking us to put our financial house in order. They no longer want us to mortgage the

future of our children and subsequent generations. The government has made a firm commitment in this respect and we intend to meet that commitment.

Canadians also want us to make manpower training and retraining one of our priorities. The unemployed want more than just an unemployment insurance cheque when they lose their job. They want to be given a reasonable chance to get back into the labour market. Thanks to this bill and our previous legislation we will be in a better position to meet their expectations because amounts spent on training will be increased to nearly \$3.5 billion annually. This is an important point.

I have seen a lot of people in my riding lose their jobs. They do not want an unemployment insurance cheque. They want to find another job but often must face the fact they lack training and skills. They are willing to take the time and make the effort to acquire those skills provided we give them the tools to help them do what it takes to re-enter the labour market as quickly and effectively as possible. That is one of the positive aspects of our unemployment insurance policy.

Canadians will no longer let their future and the prosperity of Canada be jeopardized. They no longer want the interests of Canadians to be subordinated to partisan considerations, something the opposition has failed to understand, which is why it will remain the opposition for a long time.

Since I have some time left, perhaps I will quote the list of reasons that constitute just cause for quitting one's job: sexual or other harassment, you can quit your job and receive unemployment insurance benefits; obligation to accompany a spouse or dependent child to another residence; discrimination on a prohibited ground of discrimination within the meaning of the Canadian Human Rights Act—another just cause for voluntary quitting; working conditions that constitute a danger to health or safety, just cause; obligation to care for a child or member of the immediate family, just cause.

The following reasons were added to the existing eight: reasonable assurance of another employment in the immediate future, just cause; significant changes to