

every month. It means that families that are not as well off as their neighbours can still have a decent standard of living. It isn't luxury, but we have food on the table, clothes on our backs, a roof over our heads and we can heat our homes. It means that our children, the children of families that are less well off, can go to school with other children without feeling any different. The kids from poor families have to go to the same school as kids from rich families. They have to buy the same books and of course they want to dress the same as everybody else, and that costs money. And in many cases, in the Atlantic provinces the unemployment insurance program has been able to provide these families with a secure family income.

If you visit the Atlantic region and happen to go to Beauséjour, stop at the corner store and ask the clerk what the unemployment insurance program means to him and to the families who are his customers. He will tell you those families are able to live decently thanks to the unemployment insurance program.

It is often said that people abuse the program. Some people do, but they are a minority. There will always be people who abuse the system, it doesn't matter what kind of program we come up with. I repeat, these are isolated cases. And I think the unemployment insurance program should continue to provide families in the Atlantic region and across Canada with this form of family income security. Mr. Speaker, thanks to this program, our people managed to survive the recession in the early 1980s.

This was followed by a period of economic recovery in Canada generally, and of course the Tories who came to power in 1984 are inclined to take a certain amount of credit for this prosperity.

However, if we look at the Atlantic region, what do we see? Our unemployment rate went down a little. Nevertheless, there is still a gap between the standard of living of people in Canada's more prosperous regions and

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people living in the Atlantic region, and this gap is unacceptable because it is far too wide.

Throughout this period of prosperity, as I said just now, the unemployment rate went down somewhat. However, we still lost jobs, many of which were subsequently replaced by part-time jobs—the money wasn't as good, but it still helped to reduce the unemployment rate.

Then in 1988, we had the election campaign and all those wonderful promises. It was fantastic, what they were going to do for us in the way of regional development. There was going to be more money. If I remember correctly, the great—

[*English*]

The great J.C. himself told the people of Atlantic Canada: "There will be no changes, no cuts to unemployment insurance. Maybe later, in two years, we will look at the program but there are no changes planned in UI".

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, the 1988 election campaign will be known as the great lie, because we were led to believe all kinds of things.

And of course, the Tories were re-elected. Then we got the Wilson Budget, which was all over Ottawa before it was tabled in the House. Well, that was a disaster. Cuts, cuts, cuts. Regional development programs, the Atlantic Opportunities Program, which was supposed to get \$1 billion over five years, new money that was going to be put into regional development and was going to create jobs. And now we find that they are going to dilute that billion dollars to extend it over 7 years. That means a lot less money.

The Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) told his Cabinet colleagues: You will all have to cut your budgets. Of course, the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Ms. McDougall) said: Sure, I could cut funding for the unemployment insurance program. The Government doesn't have to be involved in the program any longer. And here we are discussing the program and the proposed changes. This Budget, gave us a raw deal, but the Minister told us not to worry because even if there were changes, the people who needed unemployment insurance would get it.