

kind of proof or evidence about the statistics that are being so carelessly thrown around here?

• (1815)

No, there has been no proof provided. The hon. member has been told to put a question on the Order Paper. With 45 days to answer, this bill will be locked in a dusty vault somewhere having been passed by the other place by the time anyone tries to answer the hon. member's question.

I would suggest that there are half a million people affected. There are 250,000 who will be penalized for quitting, approximately 38,000 who will be fired and penalized; and 100,000 to 200,000—nobody is sure—who have been or will be quit and not penalized. No one knows why or how many, who has or has not qualified, who will or will not qualify. I ask everyone to think about that.

If the Department of Supply and Services had a \$2 billion expenditure for which it could not provide vouchers, I would suggest that the Auditor General would be called in immediately to undertake an investigation of the spending of \$2 billion without verification. However, we have 500,000 people who draw unemployment insurance with an average benefit of maybe \$250 a week times 26 weeks. That is \$6,500 per person times 500,000 people. That is \$3.2 billion in benefits and we do not know the reasons those people have been qualified or disqualified.

For example, suppose we placed an order for Bell helicopters that cost \$4 billion. That is causing no end of controversy right now in this very House. If we did not provide vouchers for that but just spent the \$4 billion, the Auditor General might have something to say about it.

The Prime Minister says there are 40 reasons to be disqualified. The government cannot produce one figure to explain that much less give us justification, having verified it with figures, why we need this policy shift.

Instead of bringing in these amendments the government should be going to the Auditor General and demanding an internal investigation if nobody can provide figures for \$3.2 billion worth of expenditures.

Government Orders

My colleagues have said very adequately what needs to be said with regard to unemployment insurance. I wanted to add that part.

In the time remaining to me I want to zero in on another part of Bill C-113 and that is the amendments to the Public Sector Compensation Act.

This part of the bill freezes the wages of federal public sector workers for two years. It also extends existing collective agreements for a period of two years. The effect is to push public sector workers even further behind their counterparts in the private sector. Most important, it relieves the government of any responsibility to negotiate with its employees for another two years.

The bill once again demonstrates total contempt for the collective bargaining process in this country. It flies in the face of a decision of the International Labour Organization only last November. It is one of 90 decisions that have been found against Canadian governments for failure to protect the collective bargaining process for its workers.

The committee of the ILO urged the government to revert "to the normal system of free collective bargaining established by the Public Service Staff Relations Act and in particular, to a truly independent arbitration system". However, following that decision this government is introducing yet another piece of legislation that freezes wages with no consideration for the free collective bargaining process. It is absolutely critical that this government begin to bargain and not to abandon bargaining once again for public sector workers.

In addition, how about the record of the government on pay equity? It is still fighting pay equity in the courts and in front of the Canadian Human Rights Tribunal after failing to pay up when found to be in contravention of the Canadian Human Rights Act.

• (1820)

I think it is deplorable. I think my colleagues will join me in saying that at the same time as this government is wiping out free collective bargaining for public sector workers, managers in the public sector are busy figuring out how to get a pay increase by reclassifying themselves.