

Government Orders

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Will the hon. member now put the question.

Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): I am asking the question, Mr. Speaker. I think the hon. member knows the question. I am asking him to explain the change his government has put in that provision on voluntary quits.

[Translation]

Mr. Langlois: Mr. Speaker, the present Unemployment Insurance Act provides five cases—and it is right in the law—which are considered valid reasons for quitting one's job. As I just said, they are: being required to move somewhere else; going to live in another place with one's spouse; looking after a child or someone in need; and sexual, racial or other kinds of harassment.

In our discussions we learned that unemployment insurance managers referred to 40 other cases available to them which arose from arbitration or court decisions. Managers used them at will to honestly say that so-and-so was justified in leaving his or her job.

• (1730)

Bill C-113 includes these 40 cases under 13 reasons. The law gives additional protection which is visible and requires managers to refer to it when the time comes to decide whether someone quit or left a job for a valid reason. In all honesty, to respond to the apprehensions of the member for Restigouche—Chaleur, I must say that Bill C-113 improves the system from what exists now. It requires UI managers and people who study claims to consider these points because they are now in the act.

The thirteenth point reads “any other cause to be determined” or something like that. Of course this makes it possible to add other reasons which come from the decisions of tribunals or arbitration boards.

I find Bill C-113 a tremendous improvement. If someone cannot show that he left his job for a valid reason, using one of those 40 points, then he had no valid reason for quitting. The penalty provided in Bill C-113 will apply and that person will not collect benefits.

Remember one thing. That person is not banned for life from UI. If he finds another job and works 20 weeks he can be eligible for unemployment insurance after completing 20 weeks in another job. In that way, I think that the system is flexible and gives people access to unemployment insurance in case they need it because their job ends. In that case, the reasons for applying for UI are clear, especially if the job ended.

Therefore, to answer the question of my hon. friend from Restigouche—Chaleur, Bill C-113 gives additional protection, especially in regions like ours, to people who have seasonal jobs. Knowing how industry works in our regions, I think that Bill C-113 adds more protection for people who must use unemployment insurance.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I have two minutes left.

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I have two very brief questions to ask the hon. member. First of all, I would like to ask if he believes that it is right or fair that a woman who has been sexually harassed be excluded from her hearings. The hon. member for Terrebonne said that there was precedent. The precedent happens to be the military, which has the worst record with the Human Rights Commission. I ask the hon. member, is that the kind of precedent we want to use and is it fair to exclude women from their hearings?

He has outlined the cost savings in his view to the government. Could he outline the staggering social costs to all taxpayers excluding people who are legitimately unemployed from the unemployment rolls? What will this cost?

Mr. Langlois: Mr. Speaker, the first question put by the member for Mission—Coquitlam refers to a woman who has been harassed, sexually or otherwise, being excluded from the hearing. I have to tell her very honestly that as far as unemployment insurance is concerned, I do not think that is the case. I may be completely wrong.