

Supply

I appreciate the reminder by the member for Calgary Southeast not only of a tradition but a rule of the House that is very important to our deliberations. We all know the constraints on our time away from the House. Therefore I fully respect the member's intervention.

I do not think there is a point of order. We are engaging in debate. I will return to the debate on the motion of the official opposition.

Mrs. Brown (Calgary Southeast): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate your comments.

Like everyone speaking today, I am honoured to address this motion. I clearly do not support the motion because referencing only Quebec narrows its scope. When the intent behind the motion is applied more appropriately to all provinces then of course I would support such an action.

At the end of my speech I will amend the motion so that it refers to the powers of all the provinces. Given they should all be treated equally, we must ensure motions such as these reflect that.

The motion proposed by my hon. colleague allows us to address some of the points made in the recent so-called employment insurance reforms. We believe the government intends to prorogue the House but in doing so may try to manipulate House procedure to ensure this legislation does not die on the Order Paper. Tabling the bill so close to Christmas break demonstrates that the government either does not expect to give it second reading until next February or that it hopes the bill will die on the Order Paper. Either way, tabling the bill as it has amounts to nothing more than irresponsible governance.

• (1130)

I will first address some of the amendments to employment insurance and then will focus on the government's failure to transfer powers to the provinces for labour market training. In its throne speech on January 18, 1994, the government stated that Canada's social security system must be responsive to the economic and social realities of the 1990s. This was a noble sentiment and we agree with it. However, the government also said in the throne speech that it would announce an action plan for major reform of the social security system to be completed within two years.

The minister's announcement is not major reform of the social security system and it barely qualifies as reform of the unemployment insurance system. I say this because the minister's tinkering will not create a single sustainable job.

Let us take a closer look at some of the changes. This is cosmetic change, not the kind of real governmental changes that Canadians are demanding. It is a name change; unemployment insurance is now employment insurance. Do we think that

Canada's unemployed care about what the program is called? Unemployment by any other name is unemployment. It is this kind of rhetorical grandstanding of which Canadians have grown weary. Changing the name of UI to EI will not create a single sustainable job in Canada.

There is a rollback of payroll taxes of five cents for every \$100. This is a tax rollback of one-twentieth of one per cent. This amounts to a savings akin to a wooden nickel. It is hard to imagine this so-called tax cut will create a single sustainable job in Canada.

The minister wants Canadians to think he has rolled taxes back but let us look at what is really going on. Part time workers will now have to pay the UI payroll tax which includes employer and employee shares totalling a 7 per cent tax hike. When eligibility is changed from weeks to hours, the government is imposing a tax grab on part time workers, a tax grab of over \$1 billion.

This means youth in Canada and working moms, many of them single parents, will have to foot the bill. Youth and working mothers will have to work many hours to be eligible for benefits. While they are accumulating benefits the minister will be sure to tax their paycheques. The big problem with this is the lengthy period of eligibility. It is often the case, as it is with the nature of part time work, that the contributors will move from job to job with short periods of unemployment in between. This means youth and working moms will pay benefits and seldom will be able to collect. This amounts to a substantial tax grab on a segment of society which can least afford it.

The government has no estimates of how many jobs will be lost because of it. It does not know how many jobs will be lost because it has failed to do a thorough analysis of this aspect of the bill.

According to statistics ending in October of this year, youth unemployment in Canada stands at 15.6 per cent. We needed to hear yesterday and today some ideas on how to get our youth into meaningful work situations. Instead of positive change we have learned that today's proposals will cause employers to hire fewer part time workers because a tax is effectively imposed on the hiring of part time employees.

Let me restate this point. Part time workers now represent a massive tax hike on employers. This will not create a single sustainable job. In fact this change may choke off part time work altogether. This is especially disturbing when one considers that a growing percentage of the labour force is employed part time.

The minister announced an \$800 million job training program. The auditor general's recent report indicated that these expensive and wasteful schemes do not create jobs. He criticized the Western Economic Diversification Program, ACOA in the Atlantic provinces and FORD-Q in Quebec. We all know what a colossal failure the TAGS program has been. The