

insurance scheme that is overspent. It is why we have a social insurance system that is costing us more and more. It is because people do not have jobs.

The government seems to have a hard time comprehending that if people have jobs they do not need unemployment insurance and they do not need social welfare. In fact they pay income taxes. They go out and buy goods and services that create profits for small, medium and large businesses. That creates jobs for other Canadians who can then stop claiming unemployment insurance or drawing welfare and start paying income taxes and buying goods and services that create jobs for other Canadians. It seems to me that is the kind of upward spiral that would bring some sense of hope back to this country and to families and individuals in this country.

• (1725)

I did mention there has been a pattern of wage settlements in the Public Service of Canada that have been consistently less than what the private sector is getting, less than other areas of the public sector are getting, municipalities, provinces, hospitals, schools and so on, less than the rate of inflation.

Public Service employees have done their share of trying to contain government spending when it comes to sitting down at the bargaining table. All they ask for is the right to sit down at the bargaining table. They have done their share, have shown they are prepared to do it and they are prepared to do it again.

What do they get instead? What do they get for their willingness to be part of the solution? They get another two years of wage freeze. That is not fair. That is not the kind of thing that encourages Public Service employees to regard themselves as partners with government in running this country, that encourages them to be productive and contribute to the country.

Mr. Cid Samson (Timmins—Chapleau): Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the member for Ottawa West for her speech. I think she did a very good job and she raised quite a few excellent points.

There is one thing I would like to ask the member. Over the last three weeks or so we have been asking the minister of employment over and over again to give us some statistics to prove that all these people he claims

Government Orders

have quit their jobs are loafing around and taking advantage of the system are actual people. We have asked him time and time again to give us the proof, the numbers and the statistics. He has continuously said: "Ask for it on the Order Paper". He has done all kinds of neat little things in the House to avoid the question.

I would like to ask the member a question. We are speaking on the hoist motion of six months that her party has put forward on this particular piece of legislation. Given that in 1989 the Auditor General clearly identified severe inconsistencies across the country on the application of UI penalties and the application of UI legislation, is it far beyond the time for the Auditor General to now do a thorough investigation, paying particular attention to the quits and fireds, as it pertains to this new legislation?

Mrs. Catterall: Madam Speaker, I think we have to look at two things. For people to do their job well there have to be the human resources. One area of government that has been hardest hit is the employment offices of Canada Employment and Immigration. People in those offices are frustrated because they are working long hours of overtime, often under very difficult conditions. They are dealing with people who do not have jobs, who are desperate, terrified, crying and who wonder how they are going to support their families. They are working under a great deal of strain. The number of people employed has dropped. They are no longer able to help unemployed people find jobs. They can only be processors of applications and advise people to take a look at the job board.

It is no wonder people who are unemployed are having greater difficulty accessing training and services they used to get in terms of finding new employment. The number, as I said, of cheaters in the system is so small that to administer the system to catch every one of them would cost many times more than the amount of money saved.

• (1730)

I do not know whether the Auditor General knows, but if the government knows there are cheaters in the system it should be doing something about them. It should be providing the resources in the department to do something about them rather than punishing those who it says are choosing to quit their jobs.