

Government Orders

important, if you are already receiving UI benefits, you have a better chance of getting one of these courses.

Third, apply very promptly. As soon as you know you will be let go or no longer work for the same company, you should apply right away because your two-week waiting period starts from the time of your application, not the time you lose your job. So apply right away and you will wait at most two weeks.

If you need a cheque because you are really in a bind and do not know what to do you can still ask the government to issue you a cheque right away. They have a 24-hour service and if your claim takes too long and you have bills to pay, ask for a cheque right away.

Finally, and this is very important, if you have problems with unemployment insurance, contact your member of Parliament. Conservative, Liberal or New Democrat, we are able to help you because things do go a little faster and more efficiently when a member of Parliament is involved. Also, you can always appeal. Apparently, about 25 per cent of people win their appeals against the government, so you have one chance in four of winning your claim if you are not satisfied with the decision of the Unemployment Insurance Commission.

• (1545)

Finally, keep a record of everyone you spoke to, because not only politicians forget. UI officials can often forget who you are and what you asked for.

With these suggestions, even if Bill C-113 as now proposed puts you in a bad spot, perhaps in your case you can improve your situation. But one thing is sure. With this Bill C-113 there is no chance of improving your situation.

Mrs. Marlene Catterall (Ottawa West): Mr. Speaker, in speaking on Bill C-113, I would like to follow up on what the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood was saying about the government's role.

The government's role in a society that considers itself civilized is to counteract the often cruel forces of a completely free market system, to recognize that from time to time people suffer from changes in the economy, people are hurt by the decisions of others, and to assure them that society and the community are ready to support and help them make the necessary adjustments with a view to resuming a normal life as soon as possible, so they can earn a salary and have enough money to feed their family and pay their mortgage.

[English]

When a government forgets that its role is to find a balance in society to assure that forces beyond their control do not destroy individuals or families, when it forgets its obligation to support through a period of difficulty those who have been hurt by its decisions and the decisions of others, then we truly start to have a society that is less civilized. That is really what this bill is all about.

This bill is about a government forgetting that economic forces are at work in the world hurting people badly and forcing them out of employment. I have to repeat the figures. We now have over five million Canadians, one-fifth of our population, without jobs and subsisting on either unemployment insurance or welfare. That really is a national disgrace.

This legislation tells us the system that many of these people have contributed to for all their working lives, the unemployment insurance system, will no longer be there to help them.

I will go back to the case that to me is the most indicative of what this bill is all about. It is based on the assumption that people who are not working do not want to work. It is not because there are not enough jobs or their skills may no longer be needed by their employers. It is not because the conditions of work may have become so harsh that they have become intolerable or so unsafe that they have become unhealthy or so cruel that they have become personally unbearable, which are some of the reasons people leave their jobs. I do want to talk a bit about what has become the beacon for what is wrong with this bill. That is the case of a person, usually a woman, who leaves her job because of harassment.

• (1550)

We have a very bureaucratic system and it says to this woman that she still qualifies for unemployment insurance, but only if she made sure that before she left her job that she told the harasser that she did not like what he was doing and only if she made sure that if she had a supervisor she reported it to her supervisor, and only if she did all of those bureaucratic things.

Let me tell the House about some of the women I know who find and have found themselves in that kind of a situation. They are not going to be helped at all by the assurances of the minister and the voices on the government side of this House saying that it does not really include them, because it does.