

**Mr. Bird:** That is a fact. The young people and older people of Atlantic Canada are not ashamed to work in McDonald's or wherever. They take jobs where there is work. The Hon. Member may not like to work at places like that, but let me tell him my constituents stand in line for things like that.

**Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing):** Mr. Speaker, having listened to some of the debate and having watched other parts of it, I am sure the unemployed people in my riding only wish some of the things Members opposite said actually had something to do with what takes place.

The Government's approach is a further illustration of its Conservative business oriented agenda of privatization and reducing government responsibility for the economy and social programs. I can use my Province of Saskatchewan as an example, along with most of the United Kingdom and large parts of the United States. In my province, following a similar agenda to that of the federal Government, but having started it a little earlier, there are now extremely high levels of unemployment. Saskatoon has the third highest level of unemployment in the country. We have higher income and sales taxes than before, a deficit where none existed before, lower quality and higher priced social services with long hospital waiting lists which we never experience before, and we have the highest rates of people leaving the province than ever before.

We are facing major battles over privatization of our important utilities. All this has led to a Conservative Government that will lose the next election to a New Democratic Party in Saskatchewan that is committed to a people-oriented full employment strategy and cares about the regions of Canada, and which says what it thinks and does what it says.

The agenda which the federal Government is following, and which is exhibited clearly within the changes it is suggesting to unemployment insurance, includes the notion which we have seen only too clearly in the states immediately south of the province in which I live. That notion is: Don't take jobs to the people, take people to the jobs. As a result we will have provinces that will look like North Dakota, which is basically a wasteland with huge areas of space because the residents have been sucked to some other part of the country with no effort

made to provide for the communities in which they grew up and no effort made to ensure that they can earn a living in their own communities.

The Government's economic and political motto has always been: Never accept responsibility for problems that with a little imagination you can blame on somebody else. That is clearly exhibited in the overhaul of the funding and administration of the unemployment insurance program, which is the subject of Bill C-21.

During the course of my remarks I will touch on several topics which clearly indicate that the Government is not nearly as concerned about the well-being of the unemployed as it is about the perceived need to harmonize Canadian society and Canadian social programs with those south of the border. Bill C-21 represents some of the first shots in this harmonization process.

I want to assure Canadians from coast to coast that New Democrats are ready to fight this fight to the end. The country is beginning to find out just what is in the Government's soul, given the fact that the unemployed are one of its very first targets. One would think that the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney), a self-styled friend of the people, would take on a group with greater capacity to protect itself and fight back, such as the profitable corporations which do not pay any income tax, rather than attack the unemployed.

Clearly what Bill C-21 does, as if anyone needed to be made aware of it, is signal the end of the myth that there is anything progressive about these Conservatives.

I want to begin in dealing with the specifics of unemployment insurance by reminding the House about the purpose of unemployment insurance and about the social contract that Canadian workers thought they had with the Government as to the uses of the money collected through their premium deductions. Unemployment insurance is, at its core, an income replacement program. It is meant to give Canadian workers for a time when they might be without a job the security of knowing that during personally difficult times the bills will continue to be paid and their children will continue to be fed. It provides Canadians with the dignity of knowing that of the money they receive much of that they contributed themselves. It is not all a hand-out, it was money that was contributed largely from their employers and from