

Supply

If the government is serious about dealing with people who should not be on unemployment insurance for legitimate reasons then we should not be talking about the quitters. That is because statistics and our own people whom we hire for their professional abilities are saying that the amount of dollars saved by bringing in legislation to not give unemployment insurance to quitters is almost nil.

There is another interesting statistic and the government will confirm it. We lose roughly \$200 million a year by people classified as cheaters. Obviously that is what seems to be the problem with the system and why certain members of Parliament are quick to jump to their feet and say: "Well, I know somebody who went to Florida and was on UI", or "I know someone who has a night job or is working on the side and is collecting UI". They of course are a different kettle of fish. That is the debate we should be having here today and not this one about quitters.

If you believe in fairness and if you believe that people as human beings are decent and care about society, themselves and their families certainly they are not going to quit for no reason.

Therefore this motion is something we should be very conscious of simply because of the roughly 2,000 people who are classified as quitters are quitting for very legitimate reasons. Now we are asking as parliamentarians through legislation which is going to be brought forward in the next weeks that the onus be on those people, that they are in essence guilty until proven innocent. Those 2,000 people we are talking about in this scenario are those being sexually harassed and are afraid in an unsafe work place.

It is important for members across the way to know another statistic. These are the latest figures from Statistics Canada. In 1990 for fatal occupational injuries there were 809 deaths. There were 592,824 non-fatal occupational injuries resulting in lost time and 438,449 non-fatal occupational injuries with no lost time.

One might ask what that has to do with this debate. The fact remains that there are a lot of people getting hurt and a lot of people dying on the job in this country. Now, for someone to go to a higher authority and suggest that there are unsafe working conditions, they are at risk of losing their job. If they are at risk of losing their job without some sort of ability to find another social safety net while they go through this process, they will be more

reluctant to talk about the unsafe conditions in the work place.

I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, without blinking an eye that I believe with legislation like this we are going to see fatal occupational injuries in our country rise. Men and women need to survive. They need to pay for their children's education and put food on the table. They will, as they did in the past, allow for certain occupational risks in order to make a living. I am concerned that for roughly 2,000 people we are putting Canadians in these situations of risk.

We are one of the G-7 countries foolish enough to make these changes. Germany does not do it with quitters. Italy does not do it with quitters. Japan does not do it with quitters. The only countries I can find in the G-7 that deal with quitters the way we are proposing are France, and Heaven knows why, and some of the United States.

Let us go back to what I think this government is really doing. This is a very empty gesture of saving money by penalizing quitters and not letting them collect UI. As I said before 93 per cent or 94 per cent of them get a job right away or within 10 weeks. We are really talking about a very small number of people in desperate situations. That is the reason they quit in the first place.

If that is the case then really what the government is doing through the back door is creating a smoke-screen, why I do not know. It is reducing the amount of unemployment insurance people are allowed to collect from 60 per cent to 57 per cent which is going to save \$2.5 billion. Of course we are so busy debating about quitters, about 2,000 people, that we are not talking about the roughly \$90 a month this government is prepared to take out of somebody's unemployment cheque which is so small already that the day to day costs of living cannot be met.

If this is the best this government can do to improve its position in the polls, I think the party on this side of the House really does not have anything to worry about. People really see through this when they look at the numbers and realize that these changes do nothing for us as a country except pit worker against employer. It makes Canadians feel that they cannot be trusted, that there are bunch of quitters out there who really do not care about Canada. That is a misconception all Canadians are going to see through once they have an opportunity to look at the numbers as I have tried to state them today in the short period of time I had.