

*Government Orders*

• (1805)

Tied to a freezing of benefits is a freezing of the premiums paid by my constituents personally or by the employer for their benefits. Not only are we freezing the amount of money we are paying out at last year's rate or at the 1992 rate, we are freezing the amount of money we collect from the employees at the 1992 rate.

If I ask my constituents whether they are willing to pay more in unemployment insurance premiums so that those on unemployment insurance get greater benefits, there is no hesitation in my mind what they will say: "No, I am not prepared to pay more. I didn't get a raise. There is no reason they should get one". That is also part of this particular piece of legislation.

There is some additional encouragement for job creation in this legislation. The premium holiday for small business is a very important step. A small business hiring more people does not have to pay any more premiums in the first year than it paid last year for that increase in employment. It is a small benefit, but it is an extra lift for employers in a position to hire more people. If one is creating a new small business one does not have to pay any unemployment insurance premiums in the first year.

Is that not a positive step to encourage job creation? Of course members opposite are opposed to this legislation and these ideas. I guess they can account for why they are.

There are a few extras in the legislation I would like to talk about. It happens that there are people on unemployment insurance receiving benefits. To help those people get back into the work force the government has announced a \$260 million increase in training funds for those on unemployment insurance. That is a significant increase and takes the total for UI claimants up to \$2.21 billion for the coming year. We add to that another \$1.6 billion the government pays out to those who are unemployed but not receiving UI benefits.

This shows that the Government of Canada has come to the taxpayers of Canada—the government does not have any money; its source of money is the people who are out there listening to me speak today or working on a continual basis—for \$3.8 billion in training funds. I do

not have any hesitation in saying the training funds will get people back into the work force much more quickly.

The item that received an awful lot of comment was the one related to benefits for voluntary quitters. During the committee process in which I was involved it was brought to our attention some 225,000 voluntary quitters a year will be affected by this legislation.

In the circumstance of unemployment in the country over the last few years there are 225,000 people who quit their jobs for no reason and expect—and the opposition would give it to those people—unemployment insurance benefits. Why? It is beyond me. What did that cost us last year? One billion dollars for the year. Where did we get that \$1 billion? We borrowed it or we increased premiums from those people who are working.

We have heard terrible examples of how some person may be forced to quit a job and have just cause for doing so. I believe the legislation adequately protects people who have just cause for quitting, but can we imagine the circumstance the opposition has been supporting? An employee shows up for work in the morning. He decides he has had a miserable night the night before and, to make up for it, smashes all the computers in the office. The employer shows up and says: "My goodness, isn't this an awful thing you have done? You have destroyed all the equipment in our office. You are fired".

• (1810)

The opposition wants to pay those people unemployment insurance. The employer says that the employee is fired for cause and there are no benefits; that is exactly what he deserves. However those people opposite are happy to say there should be a penalty because he was fired and instead of giving him 60 per cent of the benefits he should only get 50 per cent of them. The employer says the employee who got fired because he justly deserved to get fired should get zip from the unemployment insurance account and zip from the taxpayers of the country.

I am happy to say the legislation ensures that those who voluntarily quit their jobs or those who were fired because they deserved to be fired will not get benefits under the program. Do we have to do that?