

*Government Orders*

Why did it not specify, as the bill does, that the disqualification applies to those who have quit their jobs without cause or have been fired for misconduct? It is a major piece of information to omit and it alters radically the purpose of the bill. Yet the CNTU did not hesitate one second to convey this totally biased and false information. This is one more example of the kind of disinformation used by Bill C-113 detractors to discredit the government.

Let me give this example where they say that Canada is adjusting its social programs, the unemployment insurance program in particular, to the U.S. programs because of the Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement. We have no free trade agreement with France; still the benefit rate is 59 per cent over there and those who quit their jobs without cause are not entitled to any benefits. This in a country that has been run by a socialist government for years.

We have no free trade agreement with Japan. Nevertheless, in Japan benefits are paid at the rate of 48 per cent, not for one year but for six months.

We have no free trade agreement with England. Nevertheless, the benefit rate paid in England is 16 per cent. We have no free trade agreement with Italy and yet the benefit rate paid in Italy is 15 per cent.

Sweden is another country that the socialists constantly quote as an example. Go and see what is going on in Sweden. Let them go and see what is going on in Sweden. Decisions have to be made there too to control the system and cut costs.

As the Prime Minister said even with Bill C-113 our unemployment insurance program remains one of the most generous in all of the G-7 industrialized countries.

**An hon. member:** One of the most generous, really?

**Mr. Robitaille:** Yes, one of the most generous. Germany does give a few percentage points more than we do.

Long-standing opponents of free trade making this kind of connection between free trade and this bill is yet another striking example of disinformation.

Let me give you this example of a statement made by one of those who oppose this bill and certain hon. members of this House. I am quoting from the brief given by Mr. Paquette, of the CNTU, before the legislative committee:

A person may have worked for the same employer throughout his entire life, and if he then quits his job and takes another job for 15 weeks, he would be disqualified from receiving benefits if he were

required to have had 16 weeks of insurable employment. With Bill C-113, all the weeks of insurable employment in the first job would not count, even though premiums had been collected during this time.

Such allegations have been presented as the unquestionable truth to the workers in Quebec and Canada. The most telling however is the reply Mr. Paquette, the CNTU spokesperson, gave the legislative committee when asked what section of Bill C-113 he is referring to when making such an allegation. Here is what he said, and I quote:

This is an interpretation we discussed with *Mouvement action-chômage*, amongst others.

It gets better. I am still quoting from Mr. Paquette's testimony:

We consulted some Employment and Immigration employees. They have told us that our interpretation will be corrected by regulations.

On the basis of an interpretation, their interpretation of the proposed section 30.(1), and in spite of having been provided with ample information in their discussions with department officials, they did not hesitate one second to spread information they knew to be completely unfounded. Once again this is a clear case of disinformation for political purposes. The trouble is they did not even think for one minute about all the uncertainty they created among Canadian workers, some of whom are members of the CNTU who pay their union dues and should expect a more professional approach from their union executives.

• (1550)

What about the testimony of Mr. Hayes and Ms. Nancy Riche from the Canadian Labour Congress who said, and I quote Ms. Riche: "Approximately 20,000 penalties have been reversed. That is to say, if they were given an eight-week penalty, it was changed to four weeks or three weeks or two weeks or zero. For 20,000, whatever penalty they had been given was reversed altogether".

In fact, according to the official data from Employment and Immigration Canada, the situation is quite different. Employment and Immigration Canada is telling us that in 1992, 36,003 initial decisions were appealed to what is commonly known as the Unemployment Insurance Arbitration Tribunal. Out of these 36,003 appealed decisions, 26,700 were upheld and 8,800 reversed, a far cry from the 20,000 figure quoted by Ms. Riche.