

Government Orders

backyard welder. That is the way the Scandinavian countries do it. The democratic socialist countries such as Sweden, Denmark and Norway allow anybody to obtain training regardless of whether the person is employed. That is why those countries have such a highly skilled workforce. When I was in Sweden, it was evident that the Swedish people were horrified because their unemployment rate had gone up to 1.9 per cent.

Other people who I have tried to work with in my community are members of some of the farm labour organizations. Some of our farm industry is dependent on having a pool of farm labour available at various crop times. In order to stabilize that we have had to provide unemployment insurance during winter months. Seasonal work is a fact of life in Canada. I have tried to meet with farm labour organizations to ask, "Are there things that I can say to impress upon this government that if you do not qualify for UI you are either going to have to rely on unemployment insurance or you are going to have to simply move to different areas?"

One of the things that I am beginning to wonder about is whether this government is trying to drive everybody into southern Ontario. Is the government trying to collapse the Atlantic provinces, forcing people out of the Atlantic provinces, out of the prairie provinces and out of central British Columbia into southern Ontario?

Ms. Joy Langan (Mission—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, I rise to add my voice yet again to the debate on the government's changes to the unemployment insurance system in this country. I do so for two reasons. The first is because I share with my caucus colleagues, and other members on this side of the House, a repugnance for what this government is attempting to do in this bill. The second and most important reason is that thousands of Canadians have been left without a voice with which to tell this government that what it proposes is mean-spirited, ill-intentioned and very unjust.

We travelled this country from coast to coast and heard a great many groups and individuals voice their opposition to this bill. In fact, a vast majority of the briefs received spoke in opposition to this bill, but the government chose not to listen. Even more disgraceful, howev-

er, is the fact that a great many groups, representing those who will be hardest hit by this bill, did not receive a hearing. While we sat in luxury hotels, they were lining up at food banks. The reality of this bill is that those food bank lines will be longer and the poverty of many will deepen.

What this bill seeks to do is to readjust the labour market. It seeks to modify the behaviour—I am using government terms—of the unemployed. At its most Draconian, it seeks to destroy communities, families and break the spirit of the already disadvantaged.

This bill redirects moneys away from income support to training programs.

While no one will argue that the training in and of itself is not a good thing, we must look beyond the rhetoric to the substance of the training programs in this country. Training is not a panacea. It is not the sole solution to unemployment.

If we look at what has happened to our economy over the past 10 years since the UI system was last overhauled, we see an increased polarization in the labour market. At one end are the highly paid, high-skilled jobs, and at the other end are the low-paid, low-skilled jobs.

High unemployment throughout the 1980s in both relative and absolute terms has resulted in the proliferation of temporary and part-time jobs. Employment in the relatively low-paying service sector has grown dramatically. This has not happened independent of government action. It has happened because of the failure of government to implement a full employment policy and to redirect the restructuring of the Canadian economy.

The Hon. Member opposite who finds what I am saying so repugnant has an opportunity to get up and say so when I am finished speaking.

The problem we face is not so much one of lack of skills for the jobs available, but the lack of high-skill, high-wage jobs. We have one of the most skilled workforces in the world. What we need to do is to put it to work.

We can see that while training is a necessary component to any full employment policy, it is not enough.