

wait for him to fire them and then go and draw unemployment insurance. A system that is effective should not be conducive to that form of behaviour.

**Mr. Volpe:** .02 per cent are cheaters.

**Mr. McCreath:** We should have a reasonable expectation that people will in fact take advantage of the system when they find themselves in the condition of being unemployed and that they will reasonably seek alternative employment during the time that they are unemployed.

Something about which we hear a great deal is that people are drawing unemployment insurance but that they are not seeking alternative employment. A good scheme is one which not only protects the individual while they are unemployed but provides incentives, encouragement and assistance to get them back into the labour force as soon as possible.

The next point I should make is that the system itself should provide assistance to individuals to assist them in finding alternative employment. Indeed, if there is no readily available alternative employment, it should provide them assistance and opportunities for retraining so that they can prepare themselves to qualify for other useful long-term employment opportunities.

**Mr. Volpe:** So you have an employment strategy?

**Mr. McCreath:** One example that we have in our social systems and our social nets in our country to which I think improvement needs to be made is with respect to disabled persons. I have the privilege of serving as a member of the Standing Committee on Human Rights and the Status of Disabled Persons. Yesterday, we visited Toronto—I almost hesitate to say the word. We visited Toronto and heard from a significant number of groups which came before us to talk about the difficulties and the challenges faced by persons who for one reason or another have to learn to live with disabilities. One of the frustrations they had was that if they seek to overcome their difficulties and find alternative employment, even if it is only on a part-time basis, they are penalized for doing so by the social system and the tax system.

These people should be encouraged. They should not, as should no person, be encouraged to continue in a condition of unemployment if in fact there is an opportu-

nity for part-time or otherwise employment. We need to have incentives built into the system in that regard.

Finally, any system has to be a fair system. It has to be a system that reflects equally the needs of all Canadians, that provides equal access to all Canadians and that effectively provides equal benefit to all Canadians. We must not make it attractive for people to look to unemployment insurance as a preference to satisfying self-fulfilling and, indeed, financially rewarding employment within Canadian society.

Nevertheless, the best way to deal with the problem of unemployment is exactly what I might say this Government has done for the last four to five years. It is to have a sound economy, to have approaches from Government that facilitate the creation of jobs. We have seen the creation of a million and a half jobs during the less than five years that this Government has been in office. I might say that the same applies in my own area of Atlantic Canada. I hope we will continue.

We have some problems in Atlantic Canada with our fisheries. The Government cannot create fish. However, this Government is doing a marvellous job in providing incentives to create jobs. For example, we have seen in the last four and a half years of this Government the creation of over 108,000 jobs. I am not talking about make-work projects. I am talking about the creation of jobs, jobs that give people sound incomes, secure futures and a sense of self-fulfilment and self-reliance. At the same time we have seen a reduction in unemployment.

My hon. friends opposite raise some skepticism about this. However, the facts can speak for themselves. What have we seen during the first term of this Government? We saw a reduction in unemployment in Prince Edward Island from 13.8 per cent to 11 per cent. We have seen a reduction in New Brunswick from 14 per cent to 10 per cent and in Newfoundland from 24 per cent to 13.5 per cent. Indeed, in my own Province of Nova Scotia, we have seen a reduction in the unemployment rate from 13 per cent to 7 per cent. That is the kind of performance that we need. That is the kind of performance that goes together with an effective social network to assist Canadians.

Let me take a look at the Bill before the House and assess it against those criteria that I have set forward. What are the principal thrusts of the Bill and what are their implications? Let us face it, the unemployment insurance system is a living organism, like any other system of Government. These things are not set in time intended to be there forever and ever. As circumstances and times change, development opportunities occur. The