

There is no way that anyone is going to convince me that this is a fair penalty for people who leave their jobs because they may have a reason to leave but they cannot prove it or they cannot justify it to the agent, an agent who is under stress as it is because in this same bill their wages are being frozen for two years. Their working conditions are being affected.

According to this new and improved document people have just cause to leave their jobs for significant modifications in terms and conditions respecting wages and salaries. That is one of the conditions for leaving employment with just cause. Those agents can leave their jobs with just cause according to this because this government froze their wages. Now you tell me where the justification is.

Mr. Mac Harb (Ottawa Centre): Madam Speaker, the member is right in deploring the government action on UI, there are no two ways about it. In fact the government has recognized there are a lot of deficiencies in the UI bill. It is my hope that before proceeding with the bill it will look at the whole issue of fairness.

I want to ask my colleague from the New Democratic Party if he subscribes to the NDP government in Ontario because it has introduced a freeze when it comes also to employees at the provincial level. We on this side of the House deplore the action of any government that puts a freeze on Public Service wages, and limits Public Service wages to rates below that of inflation. I want to ask him if he deplores the action of the NDP government in Ontario when it also put a freeze on Public Service wages in Ontario.

Mr. Samson: Madam Speaker, I appreciate the question coming from my hon. friend from the Liberal Party. No one likes to see the wages of anyone being frozen. Nobody likes to see where a person's quality of life is in jeopardy.

I would like to remind the member that if the federal government would transfer the funds owed to Ontario it would not have to take these kinds of tactics.

The minister again is raising his voice and saying that is not true but the numbers speak for themselves. Check the record. Check the books. Look at the cap on CAP. Look at the transfer payments as they affect Ontario. What do you expect provincial governments to do when they do not have the income?

Government Orders

One thing I would like to point out to my Liberal friend is during the speech of the Liberal critic it was very obvious to me that he did not say one word about the reduction of benefits from 60 per cent to 50 per cent. I wonder why. Would it have anything to do with the fact that maybe that is the part of the bill the Liberals do support? Would it have anything to do with the fact that in 1978 they reduced benefits by 6-2/3 per cent? I would like to know what the Liberal Party position is on the reduction of benefits. I would like to know from the Liberal Party what impact that is going to have on local economies when, in a city like Timmins where I come from, that 3 per cent represents \$195,000 per month in reduction in spending power from the people who are unemployed.

Unemployment insurance was designed as a safety net to help boost the economy during a time of unemployment. It was designed to boost the economy.

Mr. McDermid: Help boost the economy?

Mr. Samson: Yes, boost the economy.

Mr. McDermid: Oh, come on.

Mr. Samson: Oh, come on. Yes, right, I know. Let us take all the money away and let us see what that does to the economy. Is that not a great idea? When I hear from the Liberals and they start asking me about our provincial government I look across the other way and I say: "Look, you get the transfer payments that are owed to Ontario and it will do what it has to do and will do it very well".

Mr. Peter L. McCreath (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Finance and Privatization): Madam Speaker, I would like to put a question to my hon. friend. I must confess I am impressed with his efforts on this. He is very accurately reflecting the trade union movement and the CBC on this one, but he is not in touch with what the Canadian people are saying.

When the member talks about penalty he betrays that he does not understand what the issue is here. The issue is not one of penalty; it is one of eligibility. What the minister is saying and what he is reflecting in terms of public opinion in this country is that honest, hard-working Canadians do not think, especially at a time when employment is difficult, that people who simply decide not to work any more, those people without just cause, should be eligible to draw unemployment insurance. In the same way when talking about automobile insurance, you have to smash your car before you can claim the