

Government Orders

Let us look at some of the facts and some of the problems that we have. A total of \$19.3 billion was paid out in UI benefits in 1992, including \$15.4 billion in regular benefits, \$1.77 billion in special benefits, that is for sickness, maternity, parental and adoption, \$1.84 billion in developmental uses and I am speaking about training, work sharing, job creation, self-employment assistance and that sort of thing and \$296 million went to the fishermen's and fisherwomen's benefits.

Let us look at some other figures. Unemployment payments have been rising. In 1990 there was a surplus of \$2.2 billion in the UI account. Now the account has a deficit of \$4.7 billion. Even with changes the total UI account deficit is expected to rise sharply and to reach \$7.6 billion by the end of 1993.

We have to slow the rate of growth in the expenditures. We have to curb the UI abuse and there is abuse, contrary to what my friends across the way say. We have to try to get the Canadians who want to work back to work as quickly as possible.

The UI program is an insurance program originally designed to provide temporary income support for men and women who through no fault of their own lose their jobs.

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Only those who choose to be unemployed will lose benefits. People who voluntarily seek unemployment will lose their benefits and, in an effort to curb the abuse, only those who agree or feel that they want to get out of the work force will lose their benefits.

We have all sorts of scenarios painted by my friends on the opposite benches. What if a woman is sexually harassed? If she is sexually harassed and quits her job, she has a reason for quitting her job. It has been arranged so that she can make her claim on sexual harassment behind closed doors, *in camera*, away from the employer who may be or may not be sexually harassing the individual. The government has gone miles to cover those kinds of things.

Then the government says well, if somebody has to quit because he has an allergy and cannot work in the work place, that is a valid reason for quitting. He then would be eligible for unemployment insurance.

The fallacious arguments we are hearing from the opposition benches just do not hold water when people sit down and examine the legislation.

We hear that this is a crime and that we are bringing in closure. We are not putting closure on this legislation. We have put time allocation on this legislation. We on the government benches sat and listened to the tirades from the opposition benches without putting up a speaker. We have not put up a speaker for the last couple of hours. I got up only in an attempt to clarify and to put something on the record that should be placed there.

Fairness in this whole legislation is the key. It is not fair to pay people who choose unemployment. If they choose unemployment, they should not be paid unemployment insurance.

If I have my house insured and I deliberately set it on fire and then turn around and ask the insurance company to pay for my loss, surely it would not be fair. The same applies in every insurance situation that we can think of.

It is not fair for someone to choose to be unemployed. There are people who choose to be unemployed who earn just enough points or weeks to qualify for unemployment insurance. They then choose to quit so that they can draw unemployment insurance after a certain penalty period. It is not fair to those who are paying into the system year after year.

I heard my friend from the other side say that he had a client who came into his office who had worked for 27 years. He had been paying unemployment insurance for his whole working life. He worked for this one company for 27 years and he felt really hard done by because he was not able to collect unemployment insurance after paying into it for his whole working life. I have those people come to my office also who say: Gee, I have paid into this for 30 years. I have now taken early retirement and I should be able to draw unemployment insurance.

Insurance is insurance. When you get out of the work force, whether it is through voluntary retirement, retirement or you decide to choose unemployment, surely to goodness you do not expect the unemployment insurance fund to pay.

They say what about those guys who are fired for misconduct? If someone was working for me and was paying into the unemployment insurance fund, and all of those employees who are working for me were religiously paying into it, and then through misconduct for theft or for a number of other reasons is fired, surely he should not be receiving unemployment insurance. He