

Unemployment Insurance Act

success of small and medium-sized businesses and therefore of prospective employers.

No, Mr. Speaker, that might make good economic sense as would, for example, the allocation of funds to the establishment of local industries. That might be classified as employment strategy. Instead, according to Finance Department projections, the Tories will make regional development cuts in 1990 of some 16 per cent in Western Canada, 18 per cent in Atlantic Canada, 30 per cent in Quebec and 32 per cent in Ontario.

In this context, Canadians might well ask for what jobs are the Minister's training projects planned? I know that the unemployed will ask how, in a bleaker job market, will they make ends meet with reduced benefits and longer qualifying periods. The Minister shrugs her shoulders and says it will be tough.

Mr. Speaker, this Bill has to be changed. It contains no employment or industrial strategy. In its benefit squeeze, it will force people to relocate and disrupt communities as people search for jobs. Moreover, it proposes to make those at the lower rung of the labour ladder pay for the high skills, high-tech training from which they will never be in a position to profit. Worst of all, the Government is abdicating its national responsibilities by withdrawing from its national socio-economic obligations.

Mr. Speaker, it is not too late for the Minister to effect changes to this Bill. She might begin by reviewing her Cabinet's decision and allow the committee that will be studying this Bill to travel throughout Canada to hear the voice of Canadians on the matter. Then let the Minister also use some of her much vaunted clout in Cabinet to make a case for an employment strategy that will actually create jobs and increase the security and well-being of all Canadians.

Mr. Walker: Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for his brilliant insight into this legislation. He helped the House understand just how dreadful a job the Minister is doing with this particular piece of legislation which is so important to all working people in this country. It represents, perhaps better than anything else we are dealing with, an indication of just how miserable the Government can be when it wants to be.

I would like to direct my comments and question to my hon. colleague on the question of the impact of this legislation for new Canadians.

Canada has, from one generation to the other, very generously welcomed newcomers and helped them adjust to the labour market. Newcomers typically receive the lowest paying jobs and are the most vulnerable to changing conditions from one season to the other. They often work in the oldest factories and the most run-down parts of our economy. That is where they get started. That is where they make their best efforts.

For example, I know that in the City of Winnipeg, in my own constituency, there are many people who find it difficult to maintain jobs in our declining economy. As the Speaker knows and as people in this House know, the City of Winnipeg is having a difficult time since the Conservatives took office five years ago in maintaining a strong economy. We are very concerned that newcomers in particular are going to have a difficult time maintaining themselves in the job market.

It seems to me that when you add weeks onto the number of weeks per year that you have to work and add conditions onto the accessibility to the Unemployment Insurance Act you decrease the social security we provide for new Canadians. Although nobody raises this issue in those terms, it is something that we should take into account.

• (1610)

As new Canadians adjust to this country, we find that they often need language training and upgrading of their skills. We have used community colleges, and in some provinces private institutions, to assist new Canadians in receiving the skills necessary to survive in a very tough job market.

I know that my colleague took a great deal of interest in the problems of young new Canadians in his previous life before he became a Member of Parliament. He understands the training issues very well. Perhaps he would like to share with us some of his observations of the negative impact when young people cannot get access to training through UIC-sponsored programs, and how they begin to play labour against business when money is taken out of training, how the lack of government participation in this programming can make