

Government Orders

did not deduct sufficient at the source. This is really being put between the proverbial rock and hard place.

It is just as ludicrous when a small business person is forced to shut down because after taxes, licence fees, the cost of special audits and all the intrusions that can come from government the income is just not there. The business closes down and the employer and employees are out of work.

At a time when the government could and must reduce its expenditures it stubbornly refuses to do so. Rather it borrows what it is unable to tax, while taking from people money needed to put food on their tables. What is the government using it for? Grants to special interest groups; building multicultural centres; enforcing bilingualism; grants to multinational corporations; duplication of services between departments and between provincial and federal governments. A lot of this is in the name of humanity and kindness.

The government talks about Reform policies being of the slash and burn kind. The Reform Party has never advocated slash and burn policies as we have been accused. Instead we have proposed a program of maintaining essential services such as health care, pensions and education while prioritizing areas of expenditure reductions with a goal of reducing taxes. Non-essential programs that are a heavy drain on the treasury have to go if we are not to go belly up as a country. Effective prioritizing must begin. The government continues to avoid such prioritizing.

For example as part of its so-called cuts in spending the Liberals have slated closing down the chinook salmon hatchery on the Quesnel River in Likely, British Columbia. The reason given is that the hatchery is uneconomical. This is true, but the reason it is uneconomical is it is being operated at 10 per cent of its capacity. How could it possibly be operating in an economic manner at such a low rate? The major risk of losing this hatchery is the real possibility of also losing the chinook salmon in the upper Fraser system. Along with the salmon will go the hatchery workers' jobs.

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Caron (Jonquière): Madam Speaker, I feel it is my duty to speak on Bill C-17, particularly the part concerning unemployment insurance. A duty because I am the member for Jonquière and—according to the weekend papers—the Chicoutimi-Jonquière region has again the unemployment record for Canada, 14.7 per cent. This is an official figure. You know as well as I do that many people are discouraged and no longer looking for work. These people do not show up in the statistics, but they nevertheless live in our communities.

In my area, 25 per cent of the population might be on welfare or unemployment insurance. Last week, I received a paper from

a professor at the Université du Québec which said that, in my area, the rate might be close to 50 per cent if everyone who wants to work is counted. This is enormous. That is why I feel it is my duty to speak out.

The bill reduces unemployment insurance payments, raises the minimum entry requirements and reduces the number of weeks during which unemployment insurance can be paid.

• (1230)

I read the bill carefully and the only rationale for the government to introduce such a bill is to save money. I agree that government spending should be rationalized, and during the election campaign our party was calling for deeper cuts than the ones proposed.

But why single out the unemployed? There seems to be a philosophy in that bill which says: "That is it, the government is no longer going to support you, you are going to be thrown out in the street, and then you will have to manage on your own". What we are doing is applying to the unemployed the law of the market, which is the law of the jungle. Everyone must manage on his or her own with less and less help from the community or the country.

I find this attitude scary. We are telling the unemployed: "You are probably out of work because you want it that way, you do not really want to work". We are calling into question the honesty of our fellow citizens who, we claim, like to do nothing and get paid for it. You know this is not true.

If we send people into the street to find jobs, there must be jobs to find. Where are they? The government has just launched an infrastructure program that is supposed to create 45,000 jobs in Canada. The program has just started and there is nothing concrete yet. Statistics show that many people would like to work, but are unemployed. Where are the jobs? We are often told that there are tens of thousands of unfilled positions because there is no one qualified to take them. Where are these positions?

I am a guidance counsellor by training. Before I had the honour of representing the riding of Jonquière in this House, I worked in a vocational training centre and was, among other things, in charge of admissions. Whenever I met people who wanted to be retrained and better prepared for the workplace, some would ask: "Which field has jobs available now?" These people had read in the newspapers and heard politicians say that there might be tens of thousands of jobs available. Where are these jobs advertised? In the newspapers or in the offers of employment? We do not see very many there, nor on the bulletin boards of UI offices. In my riding, there are people skilled in leading sectors because they received training in new technologies at the Université du Québec in Chicoutimi. At the CEGEP in Jonquière, at the vocational centre where I worked, people are