

*Borrowing Authority*

stream of cuts which are not going to hurt the Canadian people. He has the gall to also suggest that the workers of Canada are ripping off the unemployment insurance system. It seems to me, Mr. Speaker, that there are some very serious questions which need to be answered but which have not yet been answered by this Government. There are questions which have not been answered by the Minister of Finance.

The Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald), as part of her job-creation program, has created an unemployment insurance police force of 700 persons. Not only is this Government not satisfied with an economic measure which will deny older workers the kind of security they need in their less than high income earning years, but it has said to these older workers, "You cannot collect unemployment insurance benefits until you exhaust your severance pay, your pension benefits and until you are reduced to the lowest common denominator". This is being done in an effort, in my opinion, to reduce our universally accessible unemployment insurance scheme to nothing more than a welfare benefit. This is the same Government which said, "Universality is a sacred trust".

I am not sure the Hon. Member will applaud when he sees the further initiatives taken by the Minister of Employment and Immigration. These measures will not only impose financial hardship on those workers who most need our help, but, to add insult to injury, the Minister has set up a 700-person police force whose job it will be to weed out the so-called abusers of the system. When the Canadian people, on September 4, gave this Government the massive mandate for job creation, I do not believe this was the kind of job creation they had in mind. I am sure that Hon. Members on all sides of the House can stand in this House and provide examples, as I have attempted to do earlier today, of the financial hardship experienced by older workers. In my own community there are corporations such as Consolidated-Bathurst, where workers with combined years of service of 25 years to 30 years have been sent out on the streets with no jobs and very little chance of future employment.

The re-employment prospects of those workers are being further jeopardized by the Government's sword of Damocles which is hanging over their heads. The Government is suggesting to those workers that not only will it root them out and push them out of unemployment insurance benefits, but it will ensure that they do not get a penny from the Government of Canada until they have used every last cent of their pension savings or severance pay. I do not believe this is the mandate which the Canadian people accorded to this Government. It seems to me that we in the Official Opposition cannot support a document of this nature. We definitely need to get more information. That information has not been forthcoming, Mr. Speaker. I hope that most Hon. Members from all sides of the House do not share the same cynical view of the Canadian worker and taxpayer as expressed by the Hon. Member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn).

*[Translation]*

Mr. Speaker, I think it is clear that the Progressive Conservative Party received a massive mandate from the Canadian people on September 4 of this year. Conversely, Canadians must have the assurance, as has been customary for centuries in Parliaments not only in Canada but also in Great Britain and other countries, that this Government acknowledges its responsibility for ensuring that the Opposition's voice is heard clearly and unequivocally in all committees and in all proceedings of the House.

Up to now, we have seen a Government that promised co-operation, that it would be open, not only with the Canadian public but also with Members of Parliament, and also a Government that would like to proceed in committees and demand billions of dollars without giving the Official Opposition the information on which it can base agreement or disagreement with the Government's expenditures.

Take for instance the unemployment situation. If I am not mistaken, I heard the Hon. Member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn) say that the unemployed in Canada are people who want to take advantage of the system, especially Canadians between 50 and 60 years old.

Mr. Speaker, when the Canadian people gave the Progressive Conservative Party a mandate to create jobs, it did not mean the Government to introduce all kinds of regulations and as it were, police unemployed managers between 60 and 65 who really have trouble finding jobs.

Canadians are willing to work and do what they can, and they will even move to another city if they can find employment there. However, it is also true that there are no jobs available for the unemployed who are older and for those who are in what is called the mid-career period.

For the Government, its Members and even the Chairman of the Finance Committee, who has a fairly responsible position in this Government, to tell Canadians that the unemployed are cheats and want to take advantage of the system is something I find incredible, and I am sure that is the reason why Members on the Government side did not want him to answer any questions, because even if he is Chairman of the Finance Committee, one of the most important committees of the House of Commons, he is revealing the Progressive Conservative Party's real policy which is only referred to behind closed doors. What he is saying now is mostly what the Conservative policy was before the election. It is also quite obvious that they never wanted to tell the Canadian public the truth, because if Canadians had known before September 4 that the Government's policy would be to make cutbacks from the Atlantic to the Pacific, if Canadians had known, they would have never given the Government the mandate they gave. The Government has a responsibility here. It has a responsibility to clarify—