

Government Orders

women who are victims of sexual harassment, not necessarily physical harassment but verbal harassment. How do people prove that unless they walk around with some kind of a concealed microphone or tape recorder on their person? Do members see how this is going to bring so much tension, strife and conflict within the work place?

The government is reducing its costs of unemployment insurance but little does it realize that by withdrawing money or reducing money within the unemployment insurance envelope it is actually going to hurt small business in an economic downturn, in a severe recession.

In my riding of Brant there are many small businesses, small retail shops, which without welfare cheques from their customers and without unemployment insurance cheques from their customers would not make it during a recession. A lot of them do not want to admit it but it is the absolute truth. When people receive unemployment insurance they do not take that money and sock it into some luxury condominium in the Cayman Islands. They spend all that money and they spend it at home. They spend it on groceries, clothes, gasoline, car repairs, you name it. It goes directly back into the local economy.

Cutting back \$550 million in unemployment insurance benefits means that there is so much less money to go back into the local economies across this country.

In cutting back on unemployment insurance, in tackling the poor in this country, the disadvantaged and the unemployed I noticed that the Minister of Finance once again very conveniently side-stepped the big issue of taxing family trusts. There is over \$50 billion in family trusts, controlled by fewer than 100 families, in this country. It will now go untaxed for another 50 or 75 years until the last child living today dies. That could be 80 years. It is estimated that there will be accumulated tax losses of close to \$100 billion over the next 50 to 75 years.

• (1900)

Even in one year alone, if those family trusts were taxed—and I am talking now about the Westons, the Bronfmans, the very wealthy people in this country—it is estimated that we could get \$35 billion in taxes—billions of dollars, not millions—from that source. These people

would be forced to pay their fair share of taxes. That is equal to one year's annual budgetary deficit.

That is how serious this government is about making the tax system fair in this country. It is an absolute shame that this government allows the very rich and powerful in this country to get away without paying their fair share of taxes. At the same time it goes after those on unemployment insurance to cut back on their benefits. In my view, this government has become an absolute national disgrace.

Hon. Pauline Browes (Minister of State (Environment)): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to address members tonight concerning the economic statement recently brought down in the House of Commons.

The theme of investing in growth, investing in people, investing in our infrastructure are the themes I have heard in my own community of Scarborough Centre.

Scarborough Centre is a riding in metropolitan Toronto which has many small businesses. The heart and soul of every community and, indeed, the Canadian economy, is small business.

When businesses expand communities prosper and the Canadian economy grows. Businesses with 50 or fewer employees account for about 45 per cent of private sector employment in Canada. They have been responsible for most private sector job creation in recent years.

Between 1979 and 1990 small business has created more than two million new full-time jobs for Canadians. This is more than 80 per cent of the total jobs it created during that period. I am very proud of the vibrant small businesses we have in Scarborough Centre.

A business, however, is more than just a business to those who start it. It is a symbol of pride and fulfilment of a lifelong dream, the fruition of an idea, the result of tireless hard work and determination to make that idea come to life. The Government of Canada is working very hard to preserve and foster this sense of pride and to keep the dreams of every small business person alive in Canada.