

*Government Orders*

opinion or for any suggestions or recommendations on this bill. He deplores the fact that the government has no sensitivity toward construction workers.

I would like to ask the member for Calgary Southwest to comment on the following statement: Construction workers often leave employment near the end of a job and go through their union hiring hall to get better work prospects with another contractor. The worker leaves a job on Friday to work elsewhere on Monday. On Monday the truck does not show up, the builder goes bankrupt or the new employer found someone else. This happens all the time. The new job does not appear. How does the worker prove the case before winning the benefits? The first employer says the worker quit and the would-be employer perhaps cannot even be found or denies the story. We would hope the hiring hall would be believed but in some cases a hiring hall would not be involved. Finally, Bill C-113 may stop construction workers from taking the chance of a few extra weeks of work with another employer. Bill C-113 will hurt the construction worker's mobility and advancement.

The director of the building and constructions trade, Guy Dumoulin, has brought to my attention the question of mobility and advancement. I would ask the member for Calgary Southwest to respond to that.

**Mrs. Sparrow:** Mr. Speaker, indeed every job is very important. Construction workers are very important right across this country. None of us would deny that.

UI was designed to help people who lose their jobs through no fault of their own. It helps them temporarily while they look or now train, and there are training programs, for other work.

This particular bill says if you quit your job voluntarily without just cause, the employees of Canada are not going to subsidize you or pay you to sit at home.

**An hon. member:** Right on, Bobbie.

**Mrs. Sparrow:** We cannot afford it. Furthermore, the UI program was not set up for that. As a matter of fact I think if you wanted to take time to check with a couple of UI offices, all you would have to do is make a few phone calls. You can make one to Halifax, one in Quebec, one in Ontario and one in B.C. You can find out the abuse that is in the system.

• (1800)

The UI account exists to assist people who lose their jobs through no fault of their own. We have a choice. We

either increase the premiums, which puts pressure on the employers and the employees, or we start going after people who abuse the system.

**Mr. Vic Althouse (Mackenzie):** Mr. Speaker, I am sharing my time with the member for Mission—Coquitlam today.

I am rising to speak on Bill C-113, which has three basic elements. The first element will freeze salary increases for cabinet, government officials, members and so on. The second will make some changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act. The third element, which I will be speaking on as well, will make some changes to the Western Grain Transportation Act, which is an effort by this government to back off from the commitment into perpetuity to the Crow benefit.

I would like to start by discussing the unemployment insurance changes. Essentially the government is proposing to take away the current safety net of a waiting period from 7 to 12 weeks that now exists for those people whose leaving of an employer is in some question. If an employee leaves for what he or she thinks is just cause or for the prospect of another job that does not materialize then the waiting period is from 7 to 12 weeks. If employees leave because they feel they are being sexually harassed they only have to wait from 7 to 12 weeks for unemployment insurance to cut in if they have been unable to find a replacement job.

We have just heard the member from Calgary talk about how this system is being abused. I wanted to spend a few minutes discussing a couple of cases I have had brought to my attention over the past year in which the employees quit for what they thought was just cause, and what I am sure you, Mr. Speaker, would think was just cause, but was not considered by the current rules to be just cause. While they only had to wait 12 weeks before the unemployment insurance would come into effect, in each of these cases they did get a job before that happened. However, with the 7 to 12 week safety net being removed with this proposal they would not be eligible for unemployment insurance.

The kinds of situations raised under the rubric of just cause include the following situation. A young man who had been cross-country trucking for 10 years from coast to coast all across North America recently shifted jobs to a smaller company. While he could survive in the summertime with the equipment, he found that as the roads got worse the equipment was less able to handle