

*Government Orders*

actions and statements of the Minister. The two are not working together in a way that all Canadians find valid and can accept. We have to know who is in charge, who is calling the shots for all these departmental projects, the officials or the Minister?

In a press clipping dated September 3, we see the Deputy Minister of Employment state the philosophy underlying this bill, and I will quote him in English since I do not have the French translation:

[*English*]

“The assumption which is rather fundamental for this bill that nobody’s behaviour would be changed if you changed UI, whereas we assumed that if you make it necessary for someone to work 14 weeks instead of 12, people will make the extra effort and will work the extra two weeks in many cases where they have the opportunity”.

I do not know where they are going to find these jobs. If the deputy minister says that by simply mandating that everyone must look for another job that they will find it, the only reaction we can ask on this side of the House is, who is running the show? Is it the department, or is it the minister who condones this kind of rationale, or does the minister herself believe this? I do not know how she can believe it, because when we take a look at the government’s own statistics we can see the average duration of unemployment. The average duration of unemployment, after six years of unprecedented growth in this country, and we are going to accept the government rhetoric in this regard, nationally is 18.7 weeks; prior to these periods of unprecedented growth prior to the recession, the average period of unemployment was only 17.2 weeks so we are not making much progress.

The employment and growth rates in this country after six years of so-called unprecedented growth nationally are only 7.8 per cent. I caution all members that when we are talking about 7.8 per cent, we are speaking about a ratio that is considerably lower than the pre-recession period. At the lowest in that period it was 7.5 per cent. Nothing in this government’s strategy indicates that we are actually making any progress in that regard.

I have to ask myself again, what is it that drives this department and this minister? If we look at whether we are creating a new labour force for some purpose and reason, how do we go about it? Do we go about it by decimating the people and workers of various regions and sectors of our country, those who are less advantaged than others, especially when, in terms of labour market programs, Canada ranks well below the other

OECD nations? In fact, in employment promotion, were it not for countries like Japan and the United States, Canada would be at the very bottom in terms of investment in employment promotion. It ranks somewhere near the middle in terms of income maintenance, but that is going to change after this particular proposal.

For example, the growth of labour in Canada between 1977 and 1981 always exceeded 2.9 per cent. In the last four years, after unprecedented growth, we are one percentage point below the level that we had prior to the recession.

I do not know if we are going to think seriously that because we are going to implement Bill C-21, which is going to ravage an income-maintenance system, that we are going to satisfy the needs of the deputy minister of this department. The deputy minister says, I guess on behalf of the minister, “if we force people to look for a job for an additional two to six weeks they will find it because they can always move to Toronto. Look at all the shops that say ‘help wanted’”, at less than \$5.50 an hour. “Let them take that.” After all, minimum wage is going to be more than the average amount that one derives from unemployment insurance benefits if one qualifies. They are going to get help to move. There is a \$15 million fund. Everybody is going to move from from the maritimes, northern Ontario, the prairies, northern B.C., and the Northwest Territories, to where all those jobs exist Burlington and southern Ontario.

The growth of employment in addition to the growth of labour is still well below the rates that were verified in Canada prior to the recession. This government’s record is not all that good after six years of unprecedented growth. For example, from 1984 to 1987 there was an average of 2.6 per cent in growth of employment, whereas the average in the 1977 to 1981 period was well in excess of 3.5 per cent. Those are not my statistics. These are statistics that the government accepts. They are StatsCanada figures. I got them at the same place that the government gets its statistics.

When we take a look at where we are going, we can no longer think in terms of success in the works as the government says its program is, in terms of whether we will actually get people to work, because we have not been able to do that in sufficient numbers and with sufficient quality. I stress the word quality because what we need to do if we are going to enhance the productivity and the growth of this nation is to develop a program where people can earn more, progress, and provide long-term advantage for their entire families, where they can look beyond the needs of today and the