

where the money should be coming from. It was a distribution of income and funds which were transferred more equitably across this nation. That is now gone.

Small business will not notice it immediately because the unemployment fund has a surplus. That is simply because the rates were increased last fall. When the rates go up the following November, it is going to be the workers of this country and it is going to be the small business employers who are going to be fuelling that increase directly and dramatically.

The Government will say that it is throwing hundreds of millions of dollars of new funds into job creation. These are neither new funds, nor are they for the benefit of small business. The Minister of Finance removed these funds from the unemployment insurance program when he brought down his Budget. Small business is not in a position to take advantage of those programs. They are designed for big business. They are designed for the friends of the Party opposite. It is tragic for the people of this nation.

If this Government would like to do something for small business, then it should be acting in a manner which is going to be responsible to small business. It should consider passing legislation that is going to allow small business to survive in this country. It should be creating an environment whereby small business can function. It should be using the Federal Business Development Bank to provide loans to small business. It should be having an unemployment insurance program whereby the employer is not burdened with carrying the weight of the social programs on their backs. It should be providing an interest rate policy which is going to assist small business.

This program affects dramatically the very regions of our country. This is not unlike other Bills this Government is passing. Certainly there have been tremendous cuts in provincial transfer payments. There have been tremendous cuts with respect to regional programs.

There have been base closures. The base closures alone are a disgrace. The Government has closed the base at Summerside in Prince Edward Island which employed some 1,100 people. These are 1,100 direct jobs lost in a city of some 8,000. That is going to be devastating for that community.

Unemployment Insurance Act

In Portage la Prairie, Manitoba, the Government has taken a town of some 15,000 people and removed 700 jobs. What is the response of the Government opposite? The Minister of National Defence (Mr. McKnight) said: "We are not in the business of creating regional jobs". The Minister from Calgary Centre said that we have to look at the bottom line. This is a nation which has been built on regional development. This is a government which is turning its back on the regions of this country with cuts to VIA Rail and the whole transportation system. This is a government that is ignoring the regions.

This Government states that this Bill has some benefits for this country. It does have some benefits. It points out that it will enhance the maternity, the paternity and the sickness benefits. It is going to improve benefits to those over 65 years of age. That is true.

This Government opposite would like us to believe that the reason that those aspects of the Bill were implemented was because of its compassion for this country and its desire to help Canadians. This was one of the slickest moves which I have seen this Government do. This is a Party which is very good at being slick. It runs a slick operation.

The reason that these measures were put in place was because they were going to be forced on the Government anyway. He was already facing court actions on many of these areas. It simply decided to cut their losses and put them into this program to try to embellish itself and appease Canadians for these dastardly cuts which it has made in other areas.

I do not believe that Canadians are that gullible. I do not believe that this Government is going to get away with this. This Bill may pass but this is a Government which is now in a second majority mandate and it is feeling a little comfortable and a little arrogant. Those are attitudes for a government which finds itself in trouble when an election comes by.

This Bill affects the regions of this country. It affects Atlantic Canada. It affects northern Ontario and northern Quebec. It affects western Canada. They have all suffered under this Government. This is a Government which is failing to regard the welfare and the needs of this country.