

*Government Orders*

That is not all. Remember that I said initially this government was taking advantage of the sentiment of Canadians because clearly we are fair people. We do not want people to cheat. Let us see what the Economic Council of Canada has said about unemployed workers. A 1991 Economic Council of Canada report on people who quit their jobs said that they are not—and I want to repeat—not a drain on the unemployment insurance fund. That is what the Economic Council of Canada said. Of course we know what has happened to them. When one gives good and honest advice, then one could become a victim.

An analysis of the 1986 employment figures showed that half of all job quitters went to another job immediately. I know you know that, Mr. Speaker, but your colleagues on the government side did not know that. I want to point out that not only did half go to another job immediately but another 43 per cent found new jobs within 10 weeks. By contrast, only one in five persons who lost their jobs found work immediately and another 50 per cent had found work within 10 weeks. It is quite clear when you look at this particular credible study that this will do nothing for those who decide to quit because it is not the issue. This is not the issue.

Supposedly the government wants to go after the cheaters. We have already demonstrated that fewer than 1 per cent cheat. We have already demonstrated that out of some \$20 billion in expenditures, it is about \$200 million that is probably not being used appropriately. That is a lot of money, but proportionate to the approximately \$20 billion it is very, very little.

It is very interesting when we look at Canada in comparison to the G-7 countries. We like to talk about our involvement with the G-7. At present, Canada is in the majority. Most G-7 countries pay unemployment insurance benefits to voluntary leavers. Why is the government doing this? Why? Why? It says it is to get to the cheaters, but we find out the cheaters are very, very small and they cost very, very little. We find that. We find that the people who voluntarily leave their jobs find jobs very, very quickly. We also know that very few people leave their jobs during a recession.

Why in the world would it want to do this? I think I know why and I think I would like to share it with you,

Mr. Speaker, and with my colleagues. I said initially that they are exploiting the fears of Canadians the fear of a very tough economic situation. Money is sparse. Anyone who is cheating is hurting everyone very, very badly. I believe that and I think all Canadians believe that, but it is exaggerating that.

Second, there is our sense of fairness as Canadians because we do not want people to cheat. It is exploiting that as well. It is not attacking the problem. It is not at all attacking the problem. It is known that this unemployment insurance fund is funded by employees and workers. The government still makes a sizeable contribution, but in relationship to workers and to employers it is very, very little.

It is known that these changes could, according to government estimates—we know how good government estimates have been; those have been off time and time again—save \$2.45 billion in two years on the backs of the unemployed though. However, we also know that this fund is already almost \$5 billion in deficit and in another year or so it will be almost \$7 billion. If it is really trying to do something, this is obviously the wrong thing to do.

• (1840)

You remember this, do you not, Mr. Speaker, that it tried to redefine what poverty was. Why? It was because it was alarmed at the figures. It could not solve the problem so it said poverty is no longer what it used to be. It is now a new definition. It cut out the poor from the statistics.

This is what the government is trying to do now. It is trying to redefine what it is to be unemployed. That is what it is trying to do because it does not know how to grapple with the problems. Change the rules. Make it look as if people are cheating or exploiting the system so it can look good, it can look tough, that it can look as if it is doing the right thing. At the same time it is trying to snow its electorate.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I find it deplorable, truly deplorable. I would really have liked to see this government, for the first time in two terms, listen just a little bit to opposition members and accept some of the amendments which we had proposed.