

Mrs. Collins: Madam Speaker, it is difficult to talk about a specific case. However, we anticipate that what will happen as a result of the training that will be done with the first level of officers is that there will perhaps be a greater sensitization to issues of harassment.

Let me share with the House what harassment is, because sometimes people do not quite understand the definitions that are being used. Harassment, sexual or otherwise, is improper behaviour. The person directing the behaviour ought to have known it would be unwelcome. Harassment may be verbal, physical, deliberate and unsolicited. It may consist of only one incident or a series of incidents that demean, belittle and/or cause personal humiliation or embarrassment.

Harassment also includes abuse of power through the injurious exercise of authority for the purpose of compromising a person's employment. Acts of intimidation, threats, blackmail or coercion are also forms of harassment. Whether it is sexual or not and whether it happens once or more often, harassment cannot be tolerated.

These are the kinds of guidelines that are now being provided. I think they are going to give a much broader understanding of what harassment is to all officers so that these situations can be dealt with much more quickly and expeditiously at the first level and then not require appeals.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Madam Speaker, we are discussing Bill C-113, which is a bill dealing with unemployment insurance and other matters. It is a bill which attempts to correct many of the mistakes that the government made a few weeks ago in presenting Bill C-105, again relating to the unemployment insurance matter.

In effect Bill C-113 is an admission that the government bungled Bill C-105, that it moved in a clumsy way in drafting that bill and that it moved too quickly. It was a knee-jerk reaction to the policies of the Reform Party, which is threatening some of the Conservative candidates in the west. Therefore the government put forward these reactionary provisions in Bill C-105 concerning unemployment insurance. Now it has realized it was wrong and it is attempting to correct them.

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While these changes in Bill C-113 are an improvement they are still not right, and I would like to explain why they are still not right. First, in Bill C-105 the government was going to reduce the benefits to the unemployed from 60 per cent of their income to 57 per cent, up to a maximum of \$447 a week.

Second, Bill C-105 was going to completely cut off from unemployment insurance those who presumably left their jobs without cause and those who were fired for misconduct.

Bill C-113 has kept the cut from 60 per cent to 57 per cent for benefits but only for two years, until April 1995. One might ask why the government is making this cut to 57 per cent of salaries in the middle of one of the worst recessions that we have ever faced in this country.

• (1230)

There are over one million people unemployed. They are struggling to put food on the table, feed their children, pay their rent, and meet the basic costs of their families and the government is cutting the benefit from 60 per cent to 57 per cent for two years, and then it will once again return the benefits to 60 per cent when hopefully we will be in better times. This is something that is not acceptable. We will continue to oppose that measure.

With respect to the second and probably just as controversial part of its policies, which is the provisions that would totally prohibit from unemployment insurance those who leave their jobs without just cause or who are fired for misconduct, the government has made some improvements. For example, it will set out in the law additional grounds defining just cause. That is good. It is good the government put that in the law. It will provide that in harassment cases, sexual and otherwise, these hearings will be held in private. That is a good thing, because sometimes the claimants do not wish to discuss matters of sexual harassment, in particular, in public. Providing that this be done in private is an improvement.

The government is also providing in Bill C-113 that those who leave a job in order to preserve other jobs in the company or firm will not be denied unemployment insurance.