

Government Orders

I have a newspaper article from *The Citizen* outlining information it received from Statistics Canada. It says:

Statistics Canada figures show they are a relatively small part of total unemployment insurance claims that are currently delayed or denied.

The statistics show that in September 1992 16,710 people quit their jobs, 2,740 people were fired for misconduct, and 132,800 claims were delayed or denied.

According to Statistics Canada, the article continues:

The major factors for denying a UI claim are failure to prove a person is unemployed, not being available for or capable of work and having incomplete documentation.

That does not tell us that there are thousands of people who are quitting their jobs just because they feel like it, but tells us that people are quitting their jobs and in most cases are not being given benefits. It tells us that there is no real problem in terms of people quitting jobs.

We must look at what the government is trying to do. It is trying to create a perception that if we can convince these people to stop quitting their jobs then the UI fund will rectify itself and return to the black. It is saying that people who are working should not quit their jobs simply because they want to sit at home and then expect fellow Canadians to support them for absolutely no reason whatsoever.

Under the conditions in which we live today and under the economic failure of this government people who have a job are darned lucky and do not want to quit their jobs. They want to work.

I can bring hundreds of names, if not thousands, of people who are very willing to work if they only had a job. The government should not tell me that people are quitting simply because they want to quit. It is not true. It does not happen. The government does not have the statistics to prove that is true. They do not exist.

Let us look at the situation as it stands in Canada and the changes to the UI. I would like to refer to another article that I have from the *Hamilton Spectator* headlined "Cutting unemployment payout is mindless and moronic". The article read:

We are told that by cutting the average weekly payout of UI, we will save a couple of billion dollars. This, of course, will go to reduce our deficit. This is the same deficit that went from \$27 to \$34 billion in the past year under this government. How can they be out \$7 billion and keep their jobs let alone their self-respect?

These are not my words. They are from the *Hamilton Spectator*. That is the perception in Canada today.

This government is trying to blame all its economic failures on the unemployed. It is trying to create the myth that the unemployed are creating problem and that it is their fault they are unemployed. It is saying: "They are not victims of this economic policy. They want to be unemployed. They love suffering".

I do not understand how the government can introduce this kind of legislation and keep a straight face. How can it expect Canadians to believe that what it is doing is for the benefit of all Canadians?

The government did not anticipate that there would be such an outcry from Canadians from coast to coast to coast. It has seen the beginning of that in Montreal. It has seen the beginning of that with the people I invited here yesterday, clients of *Mouvement Action-Chômage*. We have put real faces on the problems. These are people who are directly affected. These are women who face sexual harassment in the work place. These are spouses who want to move with their families, to be with their families when the other breadwinners move as a result of their jobs.

We have seen the real faces of people who have come here and said: "I have to stay home to care for my child but I have been barred from doing that". We have seen and have heard from domestic employees who are not allowed to use the phone, to leave the premises without the assistance of their employer or to write letters unless they are screened. Yet these people are supposed to have their rights protected when they claim UI if they ever get a chance to apply for it.

One of the biggest problems with this whole legislation is sexual harassment. I do not really like to talk about sexual harassment but I must. We must consider what a person who has been sexually harassed on the job has to go through. We have seen in the new improved formula, Bill C-113, that the government is attempting to say that it has broadened the range of just cause for quitting. There are certainly acceptable circumstances under which they can quit their jobs, but in the case of sexual harassment the burden of proof belongs to the claimant. The person must go before an agent who has had his or her wages frozen for three years, who has been legislated back to work, who has worked under conditions that are a little less than good and who has sometimes worked extended hours without remunera