

*Government Orders*

raise the premiums or cap the expenditures. That is our choice.

Premiums have already gone up by one-third in the last 18 months. Raising them again would put an unduly heavy burden on the employees and employers. That leaves capping the expenditures the government chooses to do by freezing benefits for new claimants and eliminating benefits for voluntary quitters and those who are fired for misconduct. These changes will reduce the UI deficit without raising the premiums.

• (1745)

Of course amid all the partisan criticism and hysteria there has been no mention of the government's training and job creation initiatives aimed at getting those people who are unemployed back into the work force as quickly as possible. In fact, the government's first priority is to get people back into the work force while helping those who are seeking jobs.

We are spending \$3.8 billion on retraining so workers can learn the skills they need in today's work place. Using a period of unemployment to upgrade workers' skills is absolutely necessary. It is going to provide that worker with better skills suited to help him or her find a job in the market and help him or her get a stable, long-term job.

UI training programs offer more than an income between jobs; they offer a future. In total, more than one million Canadians are going to benefit from the skills training and retraining. This is the best way to help—and I have heard them speak of it—the unemployed people get back into the work force. That is \$3.8 billion for training and retraining. Getting people back into the work force is an effective way of cutting the UI deficit.

In 1993, \$2.2 billion will be spent in developmental uses funds under the UI Act to help UI recipients get back into the work force. An estimated 530,000 UI claimants are eligible for these programs. Spending on these programs is up nearly \$260 million from 1992. That is almost five times higher than it was for training programs for the unemployed in 1990.

These programs will give displaced workers quick access to training and other re-employment opportunities.

The government has also increased the self-employment assistance budget from \$25 million to \$100 million. It has set aside \$300 million to assist displaced, experienced workers who suddenly find themselves out of a job after working for many years. To help avoid lay-offs, the government has dedicated \$130 million to the work-sharing program. This is done by shortening the work week by one to three days and paying reduced wages. For the days not worked, the workers draw a normal UI benefit.

Through the job creation program, the government helps unemployed workers get back into the work force by maintaining and enhancing their skills while receiving UI benefits when other employment is not available. We have seen a great use for this job creation program. I have been in the UI employment centre office at Centre 70 in Calgary. I must say that while one would always like more funding to be put into the system, what is there is being used extremely successfully.

I have to say that far from attacking the unemployed, this government is attacking unemployment at the root. We all know that Canada is going through a difficult transition and we are adjusting to changes in the global economy. It is not just here in Canada but south of the border in the U.S., in England, in France, in Germany, in Spain, in Sweden and even in Japan. Nobody wishes this on anyone.

We need every Canadian worker to continue working.

• (1750)

We need every Canadian worker to contribute to the economy unless he or she has a valid reason for leaving the job. We know we have to equip our work force with the skills needed to meet the demands of the new technology, and technology is changing.

This is only the first of the changes we really must undergo. I hope the Leader of the Opposition can forgive me for borrowing one of President Clinton's lines, but it is time we became a nation of producers rather than a nation of consumers.