

Government Orders

I would like to suggest to all those people who are interested in UI and who want to know what their rights are under this act that they should contact their local Public Service Alliance of Canada office or the office of their member of Parliament to ask for the document "For a Just Cause".

I would like to say that the minister in committee told an anecdote about workers in his riding and I have a short anecdote too to close my remarks. A young man was out on the town in his home town. This is an anecdote by the way that was told to me in Fredericton, New Brunswick. He went across the line to have a few drinks on his motorcycle. He came back to town and had a bit of an accident on his motorcycle. He fell off his bike, injured his eye and had to miss some work. Let us say that man's boss had penalized him and fired him for not attending work because he had had an accident that the boss may have felt was self-inflicted. Would that young man have been eligible for unemployment insurance? The group of people who were discussing this, among them people who work in UI offices, said: "No, absolutely not".

• (1655)

What happened to that young man who was from New Brunswick who would not have been eligible for UI? That young man got two weeks at the Prime Minister's summer home for his troubles.

Mr. Merrithew: Small stuff.

Ms. Langan: The hon. member across the way thinks that was a cheap shot. I have to say that the unemployed in this country think that this government's policies are cheap shots at a time when there is double-digit unemployment in this country and it is taking away their benefits. It is inexcusable. There is nothing cheap about that shot except that this government has got to change its ways or be gone.

Mr. Charles A. Langlois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence): Madam Speaker, I have listened to most of my colleague's comments to the House on Bill C-113. First of all, I should say that I started listening with interest to her anecdote about the young man from New Brunswick, but I thought that the last comments about that young man were quite inappropriate for this kind of debate. It is unfortunate that

comments of that kind are used in the House when trying to make an argument, but we have heard it.

My question to the hon. member is in line with the fact that Bill C-113 will stop paying UI benefits to people who quit their job without just cause or because they are fired for disciplinary measures. Here is my question to her. Is this fair for people working and remaining at their jobs to make a living to sustain their family? I refer here to women manning the cash registers in grocery stores or in drug stores, going to their jobs every day and having to put their children in another home so that they can go to work. These people stay on the job. These women have to work on a daily basis. Is it fair that they have to pay unemployment insurance in order for people who quit their jobs without just cause to be able to draw on unemployment insurance benefits?

Ms. Langan: Madam Speaker, the question that comes from the hon. member is an indication of the lack of understanding of what this bill does to women in particular in this country.

"Is it fair for women who have to 'man'." The word nowadays is "staff" a cash register in a department store or other work place. Is it fair that she has to work and put her children in child care? That is if she can get child care. If she cannot, she will be cut off unemployment insurance if she has to quit her job unless she can prove in the regulations that were tabled in this House the other day and out of a document that came from the department that she has tried to get her spouse to take care of the child, that she has gone to her employer and asked for a change of shift, that she has asked the employer for the ability to have work sharing or that she has asked her boss for unpaid leave. If she has not done all of those things and asked for unpaid leave, then she is not eligible for unemployment insurance.

Mr. Langlois: No, no. Wrong. Answer my question. You're wrong.

Ms. Langan: Not wrong. It is right in your own document.

The other point that the hon. member made is that he thought my anecdote was inappropriate in this House. Well, my goodness, it was the truth and I thought that the truth was in fact appropriate in this House. We have had some discussions about that from time to time lately.