

*Government Orders*

She has a choice of sorts. She can stay home and draw that unemployment insurance and be with her loved ones including her three children, or she can go and seek employment. She is doing what the thousands of Newfoundlanders who live in Fort McMurray, Cambridge, Toronto, Halifax and Vancouver do; what the hundreds from my riding who work on the CP tracks from Saskatchewan through to B.C. every summer for many months do; and what the hundreds more who work on the Great Lakes boats for eight or nine months a year away from their families do.

I have to tell you that as a Newfoundlander I am insulted, absolutely insulted, by the pious suggestions of those people who tell us they will save us from ourselves, who tell us they will help us stop being lazy. I have news for you. It is not laziness that has put many of my fellow Newfoundlanders on the receiving end of unemployment insurance over the years, not laziness but absolute, dire necessity.

As in the example I just gave you of the mother with the three children, even when they have the option of receiving unemployment insurance benefits many of them opt to go and look for something better.

Other of my colleagues here on this side of the House will be making points about the individual problems with this legislation. I just want in passing to mention a couple, but I then want to get back on a theme that I think might help members of this House understand why it is the unemployment insurance system ought not to be savaged in the way it will be with this legislation.

The longer qualification period and the shorter benefit period are two proposed provisions which will play a lot of havoc in the area I represent. Why is that? Is it a game because they do not want to go to work? No, it is because there is no work to go to.

• (1710)

It is all very well for somebody who lives in southern Ontario where the economy is moving along quite fine, thank you very much, to sit in judgment on those who receive unemployment insurance benefits. It is a very different matter for those on the receiving end, a very different manner indeed.

You have to look at Newfoundland and other parts of rural Canada in this particular context. In so far as Newfoundland is concerned, and my riding of Burin—St. George's, many of the jobs are by nature seasonal occupations. That is not to anybody's blame; it is just the way it is. It is difficult in parts of Newfoundland to catch

fish through three feet of ice. It is difficult to catch fish when the Arctic ice is moving down from Greenland as it does on the northeast coast of Newfoundland, sometimes as late as June. It is foolhardy to be putting nets out there if they are going to be mowed down by an iceberg several times as high as your house.

There are realities out there. If you extract a livelihood from the harsh resources of the North Atlantic there are some realities. One of them is: just as you do not stand in front of a truck in downtown Toronto unless you have a short-term objective, you do not put your boat or nets in front of an iceberg.

All those people who piously tell us about how they are going to save Canada from lazy people ought to take a trip to Newfoundland or take a trip to Cambridge, Ontario, or Fort McMurray and have a look at the lazy Newfoundlanders they are muttering about.

They will find a couple of things if they have done a survey. They will find there are more native born Newfoundlanders living outside Newfoundland today than there are in Newfoundland. I wonder why. It is because they had enough get up and go to get up and go to where the jobs are. But some of them, for many reasons, have not had that option open to them.

We are fed up with being characterized as a bunch of lazies because we happen to take advantage of a program that was designed for our kind in the beginning.

What is our kind? It is the kind of people who through no fault of their own have to find a way to bridge themselves between seasonal job opportunities. That is what the guts of this program is all about. That is why I get upset that the government is wanting to take the guts out of this program and that is what it is doing with this legislation, make no mistake about it.

It is Tory resettlement 1989 style. It is a cowardly, not too well disguised attempt to encourage people to move to urban Canada. Well, we have news for them. I see from your signal, Sir, that my time has run out. If I had more time I would tell you what that news is.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, for now I give you notice that if this government, through unemployment insurance wrecking, through the closing of post offices, through the shutting down and abandoning of railway lines, through the foisting upon people of another tax which they cannot pay, insists on trying to shut down rural Canada as it is doing, the public will have a message for it come the next election.