

The Address

signed unemployment insurance program must be sensitive to this and reflect these trends in its design.

The fourth principle is that all government programs must have clear measurable objectives. What is the point of designing a program whose effects are not measured or cannot be measured because the objectives are never made clear? In those instances when the effects are obviously counterproductive why have a bureaucracy? Why even have a government if it will not fix the problem?

For 20 years the evidence against high benefits, regionally extended benefits and training boondoggles has been mounting. Every government in that 20 year period has cowered from fixing the problem.

The fifth principle is that all government programs must be designed to be user friendly. Today the myriad programs offered by human resources development are hopelessly complicated. As one field level bureaucrat told me: "Our job is to make poorly designed programs run efficiently". What a damning indictment of the system that is.

In the introduction of the 1985 Forget commission report there is a touching letter from a lady who decries how hopelessly complicated getting a UI benefit can be. Sadly that is still true eight years after that report was tabled.

Governments' failure to solve problems can be traced back directly to the process by which they make decisions. Without public input in the design of these programs they will never ever be able to respond to the needs of the public.

The sixth principle is that all government programs must always treat all Canadians the same. Choosing to live in a particular area of the country should not be a reason for receiving greater or longer benefits. The government must recognize that in attempting to correct what are sometimes inequities in the natural resource wealth of the country it only succeeds in corrupting the human resource wealth of the same area of the country it originally set out to help.

• (1300)

That is the malady of large tracts of Atlantic Canada and it is the legacy of a government that did not understand that government has its limitations.

The seventh principle is that all government programs should promote and encourage personal responsibility and initiative. Of course this should be demonstrated at the top by giving business and employees the responsibility for setting premiums and determining benefits. Those premiums will reflect more accurately than any government decree what businesses and employees can afford to pay in premiums and pay out in benefits while maintaining and strengthening the viability of busi-

nesses and the purchasing power of employees, thereby strengthening the economy.

Those who are chronically unemployed because they lack experience or training should be the beneficiaries of an integrated program of training and income support provided jointly by the provincial and federal governments. That, however, is a speech for another day.

Before we can reform unemployment insurance or social programs or anything we do in government, we must first reform how we make decisions including all the stakeholders looking at the long run, being aware of the current environment, having clear measurable objectives, designing programs to be user friendly, treating all Canadians equally, encouraging personal responsibility and initiative. This is the framework within which unemployment insurance should be reformed.

The \$20 billion Canadians spend on unemployment insurance is not play money. It is not the government's money. It is the product of the hard work of millions of Canadians. It is their money. It is their right to have a say in how it is spent. If we respect that most basic right we will produce a responsible and sustainable unemployment insurance program. If we respect that right in all of our deliberations we will have a government that works within its limits and lives within its means.

Hon. Roger Simmons (Burin—St. George's): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my friend from Medicine Hat for his first speech in the House. I just got the last part of it because I was so busy stuffing my face.

Mr. Nunziata: With what?

Mr. Simmons: Food. My friend from York South—Weston is here. Anything can happen now.

The member for Medicine Hat talked about the unemployment insurance program. Certainly I would be the first to agree that there is a need for change. I want to scrutinize some of the suggestions he made. One that caught my attention I will come back to in a moment. But let me make a basic point about the unemployment insurance system.

It is not a bogey. It is a system that has served this country very well. Let us not, to use a cliché, throw out the baby with the bath water. This is a system that has served this country very well.

The issue I want to come back to is the one of the variable entrance requirements. I say to the member kindly that if we were to extrapolate and take to its logical conclusion his point that one ought not to have a different entrance requirement depending on where one lives in this country, he is also espousing that all automobile insurance plans ought to be identical and that there ought not to be any variability in the type of coverage that is needed by different individuals.