

Government Orders

The government has a moral responsibility to show Canadians how it intends to prepare our nation for the future. With this bill it has abdicated that responsibility. The people of Canada are in desperate need of help in order to acquire the skills needed for the new global economy.

In light of this urgent need for action, I find it distressing that the government would present such an inert piece of legislation. We can no longer afford such an action. Canadians need to believe in the future again in order to begin the rebuilding process.

I urge the House to reject the bill.

I move:

That the motion be amended by deleting all of the words after the word "That" and by substituting the following therefor:

Bill C-113, an act to provide for government expenditure restraint, be not now read a second time, but that it be read a second time this day six months hence.

Mr. Cid Samson (Timmins—Chapleau): Madam Speaker, I rise today to speak in opposition to Bill C-113, which is an omnibus bill that covers many areas as well as unemployment insurance.

Bill C-113 addresses the Crow rate, grain subsidies, wage freezes to civil servants as well as members of Parliament and the Governor General, et cetera. We will have other speakers later in the debate who will address those particular issues. However I would particularly like to direct my attention to the section of this omnibus bill that concerns unemployment insurance.

Bill C-105, the previous bill, had many faults. The Minister of Employment and Immigration said in the scum area the other day that: "If anybody feels that I have backtracked on this they do not know the meaning of the word".

I would just like to point out to the minister that we know the meaning of the word and the minister did backtrack simply because he had to go back and redraft this bill to change certain parts that were not in the previous bill. Those came to light as a result of the pressure placed on him and his department by the opposition. If we had not brought our concerns forward he would not have had to backtrack and redraft the bill.

The question that demands to be answered is: What consultations took place prior to and after Bill C-105? Where did the minister get the information that was necessary to make these changes?

There were not any consultations for Bill C-105. It was thought to be a bill that could be rammed through the House without too much opposition because the government felt that it had enough support out there from the right wing, that it could garner some votes from this move and that it was something that was very popular.

• (1130)

There is newspaper article after newspaper article that indicates exactly why the government has done this. They clearly show that there are 50 per cent of people on the right saying: "Yes, this is great, this is really good". Therefore the Conservative party thought: "Here is an opportunity to attract some votes in the west. We will get some of that Reform vote back. This is the kind of stuff they like. They have a feeling that workers are a little less than human, that workers are there to be exploited". This attack on the unemployed is simply that.

We asked the government about statistics. We asked it on what basis it is putting this legislation forward, what it is using as its statistics. We called the minister's department to get these statistics and were told that it was having some great difficulty in getting the numbers we asked for. I asked the minister in the House to table the statistics he was using to base this change on, which would clearly show that there were thousands upon thousands upon thousands of Canadians quitting their jobs for absolutely no reason whatsoever other than that they wanted to become couch potatoes.

The minister said: "You are going to have to get those on the Order Paper. The member knows very well that is the proper procedure". If the minister had been totally honest and wanted to disprove what I was saying then he simply had to table the documents, but he did not have them. They do not exist. The biggest problem with this whole legislation is that the decision to attack the unemployed was based simply and clearly on political gain. It has nothing to do with deficit reduction or spending control.