

*Supply*

**Mr. Baker:** Madam Speaker, as hon. members from Newfoundland know, I do the appeals myself to the Appeal Board and to the Federal Court judge on all unemployment insurance appeals that go through that stage. Sometimes we have had hundreds of cases heard.

I can tell you from my dealings with the Unemployment Insurance Commission in Newfoundland: if the unemployment rate is determined by the Unemployment Insurance Commission as I think it will be, it means you take the unemployment rate, take three percentage points off of it, and seasonally adjust it.

The hon. gentleman is laughing a bit now but that is quite true. Statistics Canada would show you that in his riding the unemployment rate is far above 12 per cent. The Unemployment Insurance Commission, in judging the rate in those zones, is going to knock off quite a few percentage points from that.

We can only guess at what the effect of the legislation will be because we do not know for sure, but I can assure you of this: we had a problem in Newfoundland this year and the Government of Canada had to put up \$5 million to try to solve part of the problem of people not getting enough work even to make their unemployment insurance on 10 weeks.

Under this legislation, the Government of Canada will have to put up millions, upon millions, upon millions, upon millions of dollars if it is going to have people qualify for their unemployment insurance in the coming winters.

**Mr. Ross Reid (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Fisheries and Oceans):** Madam Speaker, I am about to make a mistake that a politician knows he should not make; that of course is to respond. I admit from the beginning that I will make that mistake.

This is the hon. member who told us before the unemployment insurance changes came down that Newfoundland would lose \$250 million and that thousands and thousands would be thrown off the unemployment rolls.

This is the person who told us four weeks ago that there were 60 communities around St. John's which were going to be affected. Now it is down to 22. I am dying for St. John's to be taken off the list as well.

This is the gentleman who asks us to believe that UIC is going to take 3 per cent off, then go on an average and move back and forward until the third Tuesday in the month.

All I do is put that before the members of House and ask them if they would stake their futures on it.

If I may return to the matter at hand now that I have transgressed, as I am sure I will again, the point, if I am going to address the motion before the House, is whether or not we need to move another bill to go ahead with the variable entrance requirements.

This House has already passed a piece of legislation that takes care of that, not only for this year but in the future, making sure it is there, making sure that the regions of this country get the protection that they need, and making sure that the people who depend on seasonal employment or live in high unemployment regions get that protection.

• (1710)

Because their friends in the other place will not move for petty political reasons, they want us to pass another piece of legislation.

This House has spoken. That legislation has been passed. It is up to their friends to ensure that the legislation gets the due attention it deserves, because it is the people of this country who are to be affected. It is the people who live in my constituency who are going to be hurt because they will not move on this piece of legislation.

It will mean that workers in Atlantic Canada will have to depend on 14 weeks. We all know we do not have that option. We all know there is a problem. That is why we have a variable entrance requirement. That is why this piece of legislation changes the system so that there is a variety of things that we can offer people. Instead of a stone wall, there are options. I will come back to the options.

Formerly unemployed workers could qualify after 10 weeks if they lived in areas of high unemployment. That has been permanently enshrined in Bill C-21, but now the stall will not assure that that happens.

Let us talk about the regional differences that others have discussed. In Toronto the unemployment rate is 3.6 per cent. The new program will demand that you have 20 weeks to qualify. That 3.6 per cent is almost full employment. There is movement in the economy. There