

Supply

base. Bill C-21 forgets seasonal variations and says we are going to do it uniformly across Canada. Treat the people in Toronto the same way as you will the people there.

Mr. Kempling: You haven't read the bill. Read the bill.

Mrs. Campbell (South West Nova): Of course I have read the bill. The parliamentary secretary to the minister of manpower can sit pompously back in his chair. He does not know the effect it will have on all Canadians because this bill definitely violates people.

I am the first one who would say and say publicly, whether in my riding or elsewhere, that there may be abuses of the unemployment insurance system and the government wants all Canadians to know that. However, I do know what this bill will do.

This bill reduces the number of weeks of benefits, according to the estimates of a local manpower office, by probably from 30 to 32 weeks of benefit for the 17 weeks of insurable earnings to 21 to 22 weeks. That is an almost 10-week reduction in benefits for 17 employable weeks. It does not take much for someone, particularly someone who has been involved with the unemployment insurance program, to realize the effect of that.

Claimants who go into one of the manpower offices in the first week of January normally need 17 weeks. That is what was needed last January in order to qualify. But, if the bill goes ahead without any further amendments, they will then receive for the 17 insurable weeks somewhere around 22 weeks of benefits. I figure that that brings us into approximately the first weeks of May. In my area, with the fishery and with the way the government has handled the fishery, we are not even sure there will be a fishery. At that time the people begin to look for work because the fish have been coming in and the people hope that there will be work.

So what do we have? We probably have people starting back to work any time after the middle of May to June. They work their overtime, they work their weeks and, if there were fish, they would work all year. They work part-time throughout the year when there are fish. This bill means that by the first week in May there will be no

more benefits for those particular claimants in that area, so these people must find work.

I can sympathize with people in the government who would like to say: "Let them find work", but when you come from an area whose economy is based on farming, fishing, forestry and tourism, the full employment season is barely the full months of May, June, July, August and September.

These people work and they get their 17 to 20 weeks, because they may as well know now that they are probably going to need anywhere from 16 to 20 weeks and then they go back on to unemployment insurance in the fall. By February they will have received all their benefits.

Municipal leaders have been telling me that this bill is bad law and that it has not been analysed. They are going to be the ones who are going to be under pressure next year. It will not be the minister from Bay Street. It will not be the Minister of Employment and Immigration who can callously sit there and pompously tell members of the opposition that they do not know what they are talking about.

Let the minister come down to the unemployment insurance office in any one of the areas. Last year at this time, 700 to 800 people were looking for unemployment insurance benefits. Last week, I think the number was around 2,400 in one office. That tells me one of two things. First, there is no work, and that I have to accept because there have been no fish even though the offshore quotas will leave about 26 million pounds the inshore could have fished in this particular month. There are no fish and the people have not had the work they have normally had.

Second, the people know that if they get their claim in before Christmas they will perhaps have a longer benefit period in the new year and will be able to adjust to the harsh requirements this government is setting down without providing any alternative.

I was around when there was a Liberal government and it changed some of the unemployment insurance rules. At that time I opposed certain of these changes, but never have I seen changes which take approximately \$50 million out of an economy like that of Nova Scotia without having at least a make-work program established by the government in order to provide work in an area for those people who need the additional weeks of work. Never have I seen that.