

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): On questions or comments, the Hon. Member for Bonavista—Trinity—Conception.

**Mr. Mifflin:** Mr. Speaker, I listened with great interest to what the Hon. Member for Kamouraska—Riviere-du-Loup had to say and I did find it very interesting.

There are certain aspects of this proposed amendment to the Unemployment Insurance Act which I would certainly like to bring to the attention of the House and on which I would certainly like to make some comments. I have spent the last couple of weeks dealing with an upset that one aspect of this amendment has caused in my riding.

I would like to read the press release of the Hon. Minister of Employment and Immigration dated June 1, 1989. In part it reads, and I am quoting verbatim:

The legislation, part of the government's recently announced Labour Force Development Strategy "Success in Works", strengthens the ability of the UI program to continue to act as an economic safety net by focusing on those in need.

There is an aspect of this legislation which has impinged on my riding in a very unsatisfactory, devastating, and disconcerting manner. I speak now of one particular aspect with which I am sure many Members certainly on this side of the House are very familiar. I am talking about the job development strategy which has been put in place. I speak not only for my riding, but I am sure I speak for the other ridings in Newfoundland, and certainly for other parts of Atlantic Canada because it was discussed this morning at various meetings.

The whole problem with this business is that the job development strategy has been a benefit to my riding not only as a safety net for insurable earnings under UI but as part of the community development programs. I have ten rural development committees in my riding. They have all been absolutely devastated by the abruptness of this change.

• (1540)

It was quoted in the press release that this change will have the program continue to act as an economic safety net. I am in receipt of a letter to one of my constituents. I wish to quote from part of it. It involves a job development application. There are hundreds of these letters in

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my riding right now. The contents of it have been sent without consultation with me, without consultation with the rural development associations and their committees, and without consultation with any of the leaders of the community. I am talking about 260 communities in my riding. Your Honour can imagine why my office and my constituency assistant are inundated with telephone calls. We do not have enough people to man the two lines that we have. The letter states in part:

Your application for funding under the Job Development Program has been assessed.

The Job Development Program is not designed to be a safety net which provides insurable employment, or a mechanism which provides community infrastructure and nothing else. The objective of Job Development is to assist long-term unemployed individuals by providing them with training and work experience in occupations with real potential for employment.

Your application is not being recommended as the training is for occupations that are either surplus to the labour market or are not in demand.

I live in a riding that is essentially a one industry riding. The transfer of \$800 million for training does not make a lot of sense to me. That equates to \$30 million that will not be used for unemployed people in Newfoundland. A great deal of it will pertain to my riding.

When people call me up, what do I explain to them? I say: "Yes, this was meant, I believe, for retraining programs." Retraining is fine in Toronto, Oshawa, or any other of the urban communities where there is not one industry but 50 or maybe 100 such as sheet metal works, fabricating companies, car factories, and ship building factories. There is no ship building in Bonavista, Newfoundland. There is no sheet metal works in Clarenville. None of these things exist. We have the potential for job training, but where are the jobs? I do not know what I can tell my constituents when they call. I do not know what I should say. Should I say: "Go back and submit a project where you have a strong element of job training"? They will ask me: "What kind of job training, trained to do what kind of jobs?"

I do not want to become repetitive, but I hope many of my constituents watching this debate. I hope that in the next three or four days or the next week or so, as long as we can talk about Bill C-21, that as a minimum they will have a better understanding for what the Government is trying to do. I do not understand it. I certainly cannot support it. I have to speak up for what might have been a well intentioned macro change for the country, but