

training and also in terms of income redistribution systems that we have in other levels and in other parts of the country.

These four issues have been dealt with on the understanding that effectively the unemployment insurance program has two basic purposes. First of all, it is an income protection scheme; secondly, it is a labour market development program.

There has been some experience, some exchange and vigorous discussion from time to time, with respect to how well each of those two purposes are fulfilled, particularly with respect to the labour market development program. I do not think there is any doubt about our willingness—and I think I am speaking for all members of the House—to see unemployment insurance continue as an effective income protection scheme as well as the labour market development program.

The task force report has some very specific recommendations to which we would like the minister to give some consideration. He mentioned some of them, I think. I did not catch all of his speech and I apologize for not getting all of it. He mentioned the question of entrance requirements and the recommendation of the task force for the elimination of the special entrance requirements for new entrants, repeaters and so on, and having one entrance requirement. That has some sense to it and we hope that the minister will bring that forward. It is clear that if we had a single entrance requirement we would have a sense of equity and simplicity that would help in the comprehension of the program.

The minister may also have mentioned that the task force report talks about some changes in the benefits schemes. I think the minister will probably have to avoid that for a while. The essence of the task force report is that, for good and sufficient reason which I need not go into at this point, there ought to be a tightening up of the regulations and a diminishing of the benefits. From time to time we have had some differences of opinion with the minister, but I have never heard any opinion that he would be so foolish as to take that step at this point in time.

The task force also referred to maternity benefits. In particular it went on, as the minister indicated in his own remarks, to deal with the special conditions surrounding what is known as the "Magic 10" rule. Even more so, the restrictions on adoptive parents is something that the minister could bring forward.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Crombie: It is even a human rights problem. It is not known merely as another regulation with respect to a benefit. If I am correct, the Human Rights Commission has already spoken on the matter. Certainly it is a question of human rights, and it is one thing that could be singled out by the minister without waiting for the finality of the comprehensive review.

• (1230)

The minister mentioned a number of other aspects of the task force report. I think all I need to say to conclude my thoughts on the task force report is that I urge the minister to

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proceed with it. I know he has a lot on his plate, but there are aspects or sections which could be knifed out of the report and dealt with. I think we are as interested as the minister in making sure people have faith in unemployment insurance as a program both for income protection and for labour market development. Those two functions as part of the program are as important to us and the Canadian people as they are to the minister. The more he can do to show that the scheme or the program continues to serve Canadians, as it has for two and a half generations, the better, and we would certainly support him.

There are one or two smaller problems. They are not small in one sense because they affect people and they are always important, but they do not necessarily affect as many people as some of the things I and the minister have been talking about.

One problem we find from time to time is with the regions that are used for the unemployment insurance scheme, particularly in relation to the fact that we are now specifically talking about regional variations. Whenever we draw boundaries of any kind, whether they are physical, ideological, emotional or spiritual, those closest to the boundary get hurt. So I am not arguing that there has been any intention to create problems; indeed, there are some problems, and I will cite one example for the minister.

If we go to the riding of Simcoe North, we will find that that riding is divided in half in terms of the regional variation rate. One half is the Georgian Bay area and the other is the Toronto area. I am sure most of the people in the Georgian Bay area wish they could have been included in the Toronto area for reasons other than unemployment insurance, but the fact is that there are two small townships in that portion which is included in the Toronto catchment area, and those two townships are Rama and Mara. Unfortunately, Rama and Mara have high unemployment rates, but they are in the Toronto area. Therefore, the people who work in Rama and Mara have to work more weeks in order to have the same qualifications as their brethren in Orillia, which is their normal catchment area.

The boundary review committee was approached about this, and the only suggestion it made at that time was that it would have to wait until after the 1981 census. Incidentally, I might say in December, 1979, DREE made a report and included these townships in an area which clearly would be suffering from high unemployment rates into the mid-1980s, so the minister has some specific information from DREE, a December, 1979 report, which talks about such areas as Owen Sound, Orangeville, Barrie, Orillia, Lindsay and Peterborough and includes those areas as areas of high unemployment into the mid-1980s.

The people who live in the little townships of Rama and Mara would be forever grateful if they could find themselves included in the Georgian Bay section rather than the Toronto section, because that would mean they would not have to have what they consider to be—and I think quite rightly—unfair qualifications for the variation rate.