

live. Nothing has changed, so all that we have heard is craziness because it follows on from where we are today.

• (1700)

I do not like the fact that some of the people in my constituency will need extra time to qualify for unemployment insurance, but I am a damned sight happier that people in the areas around the city of St. John's, in Bell Island, in Colliers, in Avondale, in Cupid's and in Brigus now have the opportunity to qualify like the areas around them where the unemployment rate is high. We have always had to draw lines.

There have always been questions about Goobies, and where the line is and where the line is not. There have always been some areas that do better than others. I get the message but I cannot let it go by. "Unconstitutional", he says. I cannot believe it. He says it is a violation of our constitutional rights. They violated them.

Mr. Baker: Madam Speaker, to me it is unconstitutional to discriminate against somebody because of where they live.

We had lines drawn in Newfoundland on the basis of an unemployment rate that was relatively low. We have moved to a system where we are drawing lines based on 15 per cent unemployment. That is quite a difference. Not only that, but the hon. member is saying that we had lines drawn before in Newfoundland. Yes, we did, but it did not matter what side of the line we lived on.

Now it does, Madam Speaker, right throughout Newfoundland and Labrador, but much worse in the St. John's area than it was before. Why? Because there are 22 communities listed in with St. John's. Undoubtedly, it is going to require a great many weeks to qualify in that zone.

Then you have another line drawn in Newfoundland which separates the medium from the really bad off, and you have another line to deal with in Newfoundland. That is a lot worse than it was before. You could have redrawn the lines and kept it at 11.5 per cent. That is what the witnesses wanted.

The next thing the government is going to do is require more than 10 weeks if the unemployment rate is below perhaps 20 per cent. That is the next step for the

Supply

Government of Canada; in other words, to do away with the unemployment insurance scheme totally.

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Champagne): The hon. member for Burin—St. George's.

Mr. Simmons: Madam Speaker, I have watched with great interest—

Mr. Reid: Is he on debate, Madam Speaker?

Mr. Simmons: No. I am allowed to ask questions too, if the member from St. John's East doesn't mind if we ask a question. I am glad to have his permission. We wouldn't want to do it without his permission.

The member for St. John's East and the member for Gander—Grand Falls focus very graphically on the two sides of the debate in Newfoundland. My friend for Gander—Grand Falls is saying that white is white and he is right, white is white.

The gentleman from St. John's East is saying that black is white. I want to say to him before I put my question that he should not dig his hole too deep because there are a lot of people who are going to hurt under this new legislation. He can put the best face on it he wants to. There are still a lot of people who are going to hurt. I will get to him later if he gets the courage to get up and speak in this debate.

I want to put a question to my colleague for Gander—Grand Falls and to congratulate him first of all on his very graphic description of that line. One is almost moved to poetry, to borrow from another poet: "Have you counted the cost, if your UI be lost, because you sleep to the south of the line?" I could go on, but the point I make is this: Has he put some figures on this either in terms of his own riding and/or all of Newfoundland?

Can he indicate to us or to the House what this is going to mean in terms of a misery index? How many people are going to hurt in round thousands? I know he does not have the figure at hand, but he probably has it in his head, because he has done a lot of work on this.

I ask the member for Gander—Grand Falls if he could educate the gentleman from St. John's East a bit. In the process could he tell us approximately how many people are going to be even more miserable if this legislation comes in, if this crowd has its will and inflicts its majority on this House and the people of Canada?