

AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

FIRE SERVICES EXEMPLARY SERVICE MEDAL—INELIGIBILITY OF RETIRED FIRE-FIGHTERS

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, the Toronto Fire-fighters War Veterans Association has been making a reasonable request that Canadian fire-fighters who retired from fire-fighting on or before August 28, 1985, be given the right to be considered for the award of the Fire Services Exemplary Service Medal.

They do not feel their request has been given sympathetic consideration and this is why they have written to every Member of Parliament to solicit support. They have also widely circulated a petition to be presented to Members of Parliament to show support for their cause by their friends and neighbours.

Surely, Mr. Speaker, those veteran fire-fighters should not be forced into petitioning their Members of Parliament to have their service to Canada recognized. That service was appreciated and it should be recognized now by granting the award they should be entitled to receive without any further delay.

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[Translation]

THE CONSTITUTION

SEPARATION OF POWERS

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, the Meech Lake Accord and the free trade agreement respect and reflect the existing division of constitutional powers. Both initiatives reflect this Government's commitment to and its respect for a strong federal Government and strong provincial governments. Since 1984, federal-provincial relations have been marked by consultation and consensus, instead of the kind of confrontation we saw under the previous Government. The Meech Lake Accord continues this policy by establishing mechanisms to promote harmony between both levels of government.

On both the free trade agreement and the Meech Lake Accord, the provinces were frequently consulted and fully informed. The Bill does not impinge on areas of provincial jurisdiction, it amends relevant federal legislation and authorizes the Governor in Council to adopt any regulations it deems necessary to implement the agreement, to the extent that such regulations are essential to the application of the chapter on wines and spirits and are not provided under provincial legislation.

S. O. 21

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

QUALIFYING CRITERIA

Mr. Fernand Robichaud (Westmorland—Kent): Mr. Speaker, last week, the Department of Employment and Immigration announced to the people of Southeast New Brunswick that from now on, they must have sixteen weeks of insurable employment instead of ten, to be eligible for unemployment insurance. Mr. Speaker, this will have a devastating effect on the economy of the districts of Westmorland, Kent and Albert, which largely depend on seasonal jobs that cover periods of not more than ten weeks.

Statistics Canada reports that the unemployment rate for Southeast New Brunswick, which includes the districts of Westmorland, Kent and Albert, averaged 13.4 per cent for February, March and April. These are the figures the Department uses to calculate the number of weeks of insurable employment. However, if we look at those districts without including the city of Moncton, the unemployment rate for the same months works out at about 26.4 per cent. Mr. Speaker, that is how people are being treated in rural areas!

Last week, I asked the responsible Minister to put the period of insurable employment back at ten weeks, but she refuses to do anything about it. Mr. Speaker, I repeat my request on behalf of the people of Southeast New Brunswick. The period of insurable employment must be put back at ten weeks.

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[English]

NUCLEAR ARMAMENTS

NUCLEAR WEAPONS ON WARSHIPS VISITING CANADIAN PORTS

Mr. Jim Manly (Cowichan—Malahat—The Islands): Mr. Speaker, last year warships carrying nuclear weapons, mostly from the United States, visited Canadian ports 63 times. A retired United States admiral has said that any vessel capable of carrying nuclear arms is, in fact, carrying them.

But Canada, while claiming to be a country that does not permit nuclear weapons on its territory, does not even ask visiting ships whether or not they carry them. We are like the legendary Sunday school teacher who had a Saturday night job playing the piano but said he did not understand what was going on in all those little rooms upstairs.

Canadians do not appreciate this kind of hypocrisy on a question so important to world peace and security. We want our Government to defend our policy of not allowing nuclear weapons.

• (1415)

We look at the example of New Zealand. If such a small country can show integrity and courage on this issue, why can't we? If the Conservatives are not willing to insist that