

Routine Proceedings

budget cuts. Consequently, he said, the accuracy of the survey is now doubtful.

He pointed out that in 1986, 5,217 households were dropped from the survey. If you are going to cut back on the resources to Statistics Canada, how can Statistics Canada give us reliable and accurate information with respect to unemployment?

This report and this policy produced by the government this morning is not acceptable. It is more tinkering. It is more ad hockery. It is more of the politics of rhetoric. It is going to make it worse for the unemployed in the large cities of Canada.

We are going to ask that this report be referred to the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration so that it can be considered in detail *vis-à-vis* the new Bill C-21 which went through this House.

Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn): Mr. Speaker, what we have just heard this morning is one of the major aftershocks of the earthquake that hit not just the unemployed people of Canada, but hit all Canadian citizens in April with the introduction of Bill C-21. Is it not amazing that when it is convenient for the government it can act in so much haste?

This is not a crucial part of Bill C-21, but an absolutely fundamental part. The changes to the boundaries affect what happens in Bill C-21 so fundamentally that all should have been part and parcel of the same thing. The citizens of Canada should have been able to assess what was happening to their lives, to their families, to their children, to their jobs and to their possibilities of income security at the same time as Bill C-21 was being considered.

There has been haste when it suits the government. There has been closure at every stage. For all intents and purposes there was closure on the length of time that the committee was able to travel. There was closure at report stage and at third reading. But there has been tardiness, again when it suits the government, in the introduction of these fundamental changes to what goes on in the regions, and fundamental changes to the boundaries. That is—to repeat myself, and it bears repeating—fundamentally part of Bill C-21. There was tardiness because, again, the government, as it did with the impact study, did not want the Canadian public to

know what the changes were or how they would impact upon them once Bill C-21 was put into effect.

What this has done is to really put into question everything the government has done. By implication, by guilt through association, it has put into doubt what the opposition has done as well because we were not able to do our job properly on the basis of having insufficient information to go on. It has also put into question the work that a tremendous number of people put in over the summer preparing briefs to present to the committee.

This is just another addition to the vile, I suppose is the best word to describe it, actions of this government in relation to its actions toward the unemployed. Yet the words it is couched in are: "based on the principle of equality that underlines our system". Our system was not all that great before the introduction of Bill C-21, but it sure as the dickens is not anywhere as equitable now, never mind the boundary changes.

Another rather interesting statement in the release this morning is and I think it is a direct quote, but if not it is at least a paraphrase: "The regions defined in 1977-78 are no longer appropriate to Canada's current socioeconomic realities. Labour markets change constantly—" Something to that effect was said. Yet some of the underlying rationale of the changes which were incorporated in Bill C-21 are based, according to the government, on something that happened in 1977. That was when it was discovered that if the length of time was extended that people had to work in order to qualify that all of a sudden, magically, they found the time. The government said that it discovered that going through the history in 1977. That was one of the underlying reasons the government made the changes which we find in Bill C-21.

We have an admission that what was current in 1977 is no longer current. What was relevant in 1977 is no longer relevant. I would suggest that that too throws into total question not only Bill C-21, not only the boundary changes, but the philosophy underlying the government's rationale for making these changes.

• (1140)

I conclude by saying that what we have here is another chapter in this government's admission that its system is failing, that its philosophy is not able to contribute to our society in the way that it promised. I suggest that Canadians should take note of what is happening here this morning. They should take note of the tardiness, the haste with which the government works when it suits.