

Supply

because they were not heard in the House of Commons committee.

I ask the minister why she is opposed to that. Why is she opposed to the democratic right of Canadians to voice their views on a very serious change in their lives and their economy?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vézina: Madam Speaker, I would like first to point out to my hon. friend that we need no lessons in democracy.

Mr. Allmand: Yes, you do!

Mrs. Vézina: We have an advisory committee which met groups and had discussions with UI claimants. We have a structure which involves a House of Commons and a Senate. What I am re-emphasizing to the House is the need to enact as soon as possible the legislation now before us, Bill C-21. It gives me very much pleasure to point to the statistics of thousands of people, claimants who ask for the right to be heard. I will simply remind you of the reality of the calendar.

On January 1st, we must implement the program if it is to be efficient and serve its primary goal of helping workers who are willingly looking for a job, after having lost their jobs for whatever reason. It is urgent that we implement these changes to ensure that the system's primary purpose be fulfilled, to achieve what this reform sets out to do which is training, in partnership with the private sector. I therefore remind the House of the need to approve the Bill as soon as possible. As I said, the House will adjourn in three weeks. And my hope is, as a Member of Parliament for an area that knows all about those 10 to 14-week entry requirements and unemployment rates, and what I want is that we show respect for workers who are looking for jobs. I want to give them renewed assurances, as a government member, that our safety net will be available, today and tomorrow, to the unemployed men and women who are looking for jobs, and I would like to recall that the methods introduced through Bill C-21 are an active, dynamic, and efficient way of developing a skilled, and on effective force for next year and the years to come.

[*English*]

Mr. Allmand: Madam Speaker, the minister knows that she introduced the new unemployment insurance regions the day after we completed the debate on Bill C-21 in this House. She waited until we had finished the

debate and until we voted on it at third reading, and then she showed us the new regions.

All the groups that appeared before the House of Commons committee did not know what those new regions would be. Members of this House who debated the bill did not know what those new regions would be. Now we have to examine Bill C-21 in conjunction with those new regions.

Considering that, does the minister not understand that it is reasonable for people to discuss this bill in the light of the new regions that she presented to us the day after we voted on that bill in this House? Is it not reasonable that these groups should have the right to give their views on the joint impact of Bill C-21 and the new regions? I ask her this again because she did not give me a logical answer.

The minister said that she cannot learn anything about consultation from us. She is talking about private consultation in the department and in the office of the minister. We are talking about public consultation in committee, with the press present and the public participating in the consultations.

We are not talking about private consultation. We are talking about public consultation. Since the minister herself introduced the new regions after the debate was completed in this House, is it not reasonable to have some discussion in the Senate with groups on what the joint result will be of the new regions and the bill?

Again, would the minister not reconsider and along with the minister for employment extend the variable entrance requirement for at least a couple of months until the Senate reasonably hears those groups that have something worth while to say? Why is she opposed to that?

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Vézina: Madam Speaker, my colleague knows very well, since he has been in the House of Commons for quite a while—I have only been here for five years—and knows very well what “consultation” means. You have criticized us as a government enough since 1984 for consulting too much. What you are asking me to do today before implementing Bill C-21 is to consult some more, leading Canadians to believe that the redefinition of economic regions is the same as Bill C-21, even without Bill C-21. Madam Speaker, the economic regions had to be redefined. As I mentioned briefly, the government that preceded us neglected to review the economic reality of the regions, neglected to analyse the economic situation, to recognize regional