

I would point out to him, among other things, that to generalize like that may not in fact make sense. I have walked along Bloor Street in Toronto where there are signs offering jobs. I have walked in areas of my constituency where there are signs in retail stores offering jobs.

It is a fact, as Peter Cook pointed out in *The Globe and Mail* this morning, that the rate of unemployment among older workers in Canada today is very substantially higher than it is in many other countries. Older workers aged 55 or over cannot easily get jobs waiting on tables in restaurants, standing behind counters at McDonald's, or selling trendy designer sportswear in a sporting goods shop. They may ask for a job but the manager will hum and haw, look rather embarrassed, and say that he does not think it would be appropriate for that person to take that job.

It has been suggested that in time 69-year-olds will be serving hamburgers at McDonald's because the flow of young people into the labour market is diminishing and the demand for their services will increase. While that may come in time, right now a 17-week requirement of attachment to the workforce may be very cruel to older workers who have difficulty getting sustained employment even if they live near an area of relatively low unemployment.

I suggest the Government has a stereotype of how workers just want to lie in the sun and therefore must be forced to work. My experience is that people want to work. People find a great deal of their identity and part of their contribution to society in working. Certainly people with children at home do not want to go home to say they spent the day on the beach because they did not care to look for a job. Kids expect their parents to have jobs. Parents feel inadequate if they do not have a job. Therefore, the suggestion that people under the 10-week requirement would then more or less rip off the Canadian taxpayers does not do credit to the Government.

There should be a program in Canada that is dedicated to ensuring full employment and that jobs are available in every part of the country to all Canadians, young and older workers alike. I believe that kind of program can be accompanied with a program that is relatively flexible and accommodates the fact that people at certain ages, perhaps with certain skills, unfortunately may find themselves unemployed with less than 16 or 17 weeks attachment to the labour force. That could be accommodated by the kind of amendment proposed by my colleague, the Hon. Member for Thunder Bay—Atikokan.

**Mr. Boudria:** Mr. Chairman, I want to take a moment to speak to this amendment offered to Clause 1 by the Member from the New Democratic Party. The Hon. Member for Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe made a very eloquent speech a few moments ago in support of the amendment. I am sure Members on all sides of the House took note of the very excellent speech. Not only did he support the initiative, which is a good one, he added a very important component of which I hope Members opposite will take note. It is the fact that the 10-week variable entrance requirement that exists now in certain regions of Canada only applies to a person who is

unemployed and had worked a sufficient number of weeks in order to qualify.

What about a new worker who is not only a young person coming out of school. Let us take the case of a woman who is re-entering the workforce after a number of years. Interestingly enough, the Government has a job re-entry program specifically designed to help women who have not worked for 10 years, 15 years, or not at all get into the workforce. The Government takes credit for inventing this program to assist them to get back into the workforce, yet when this woman gets back into the workforce in an area where this 10-week rule applies, she must have 20 weeks attachment to the workforce even though she is in that 10-week VER region. She has put all that time on this course to enable her to join the workforce. It is a double standard. The Government cannot claim credit for this re-entry program on the one hand while at the same time creating a situation that allows this to happen.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, in the riding that I represent, which you know very well—I am sure that most Members know it a little because I talk about it from time to time in the House of Commons—the Hawkesbury area, for example, has a very high rate of unemployment. But it is a small group in the whole population of Canada; it is not a region in itself, it is not even a mini-region, so to speak, for census purposes. It is not big enough for that. So the region that I represent, the Hawkesbury region, might have an unemployment rate of 12, 13, 14 or 15 per cent, but it is still within a larger region which has a much lower unemployment rate.

So when the unemployment rate is calculated for this region, it is taken for Prescott—Russell as a whole for statistical purposes; Glengarry is something else. The unemployment rate for all of Prescott—Russell is something like 7 or 8 per cent. But we know very well that for Prescott County, the unemployment rate would be about 11 per cent, and for the immediate area of Hawkesbury, maybe 13 or 14 per cent. Nevertheless, those people are not eligible for the 10-week qualifying period because they live in a region that supposedly has a lower rate of unemployment. My colleague, the Hon. Member for Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin), told us that the 10-week rule should apply everywhere. And he is right, because if someone is out of work, be it in Hawkesbury, in Ottawa, in Toronto, where there are many jobs, or in Newfoundland, the effects are the same. The person involved has no salary.

• (1320)

[English]

It does not give one much comfort to know that when one is unemployed one is part of a smaller group as opposed to part of a larger group. In other words, if one is unemployed in an area of lower unemployment or an area of higher unemployment, the effect is the same—one does not have a job. Therefore I think the 10-week rule should apply everywhere.