

*Routine Proceedings*

have to wait for the maximum number of weeks to be qualified.

I point out that a report published this morning states that there are now 20,000 homeless people roaming the streets of Toronto and that 84,000 households depend on food banks. So the 3.4 per cent unemployment rate does not tell the whole story with respect to Toronto.

In Montreal the September unemployment rate was 8 per cent but there were 126,000 unemployed, which again goes way beyond the total number of unemployed in Newfoundland or in Nova Scotia. In Montreal, because of the unemployment rate, it will require 16 weeks of work to qualify while originally it had been ten weeks. In Vancouver the unemployment rate was 6.1 per cent in September but there were 51,000 unemployed.

• (1130)

To go back to Montreal, I raised this matter in the House in June when a report was published by the Montreal Commission for Economic Development. That commission pointed out that in 23 neighbourhoods in Montreal the unemployment rate was over 15 per cent, and in six neighbourhoods it was over 20 per cent. For example, the report pointed out that in Park Extension the unemployment rate was 21 per cent. In Plateau Mont Royal it was 18 per cent.

This new map which isolates the metropolitan regions so that they are hived off or separated from the rural regions may be a good thing for the rural region, but it does not answer the problem of equity. It does not answer the problem of justice because the new map has to be considered with the provisions of Bill C-21.

The minister in putting forward this map or this report this morning said that this is going to bring about equity and justice for the unemployed. I want to point out that in the last Parliament the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration in considering this matter stated: "Your committee supports the principle that the same treatment should be afforded claimants in all regions. A common program would provide more equitable and more compassionate treatment of disadvantaged persons in lower unemployment regions

whose individual circumstances are not reflected by the regional unemployment rate".

The committee recommended a common entrance requirement of 10 weeks no matter where you live in Canada because individuals are affected by unemployment, not regions. The unemployed person in Toronto, Montreal or Vancouver, even though the unemployment rate may be lower than in the rural area, is just as hard hit as the person in the rural area. It is unfair to make this even worse by this new map that the minister has put forward today.

I referred to the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration which stated that all unemployed claimants should be treated the same, and that we should have one common standard for the whole country. I also refer to the Forget Commission, a royal commission set up by the government in the last Parliament.

What did Mr. Forget in his royal commission say? The commission said "that the current program is perceived by many to be unfair, illogical and at variance with the principles of social insurance and overly complex. Different criteria are applied and different benefits are provided to individuals who are in similar circumstances. The entrance requirements are complicated and there are different benefit phases". It goes on to say "that the practice of basing eligibility on the local unemployment rate is unfair since that rate is a poor indicator of job opportunities".

Because of all those things this new map of unemployment regions put forward this morning may help in some rural areas, but it is going to worsen the situation for unemployed in the metropolitan regions.

Another reason why the report tabled by the minister this morning is not acceptable is that the government, according to the recent report of the Auditor General, has cut back on the resources to Statistics Canada. As a result of those cut-backs reports on labour market statistics are now questionable or unreliable. I pointed out in a question that I raised in this House on October 26 following the Auditor General's report where the Auditor General had said that the sample sizes of the labour force survey have been reduced due to recent