payments and trying to arrive at an elimination of the deficit sooner was not the way in which we felt we should proceed at this time.

Mr. Rompkey: Mr. Chairman, I wonder if the Minister could clarify one of the answers which she gave to me. Could she double-check to make certain that it relates to the extension of unemployment insurance benefits in Labrador? Last week she announced that a special amount of money had been previously made available for the same reason. However, I thought she said a minute ago that Labrador fishermen who were receiving unemployment insurance would receive those payments as of June 1. That was not my understanding in talking with her officials.

• (1220)

I wonder if the Minister would like to clarify that for the record so that we know exactly when fisherpersons in Labrador would be eligible for these unemployment insurance benefits? As the Minister can appreciate, the seasons open at different times in different places. There is not one date when the season opens. The Department of Fisheries has set various opening dates. The reality is that although people on the Island of Newfoundland qualify for these benefits, the people in Labrador do not, possibly because their season might open at a different time. Both Newfoundland and Labrador suffer from the same phenomenon of ice problems around the coast. Would the Minister make doubly sure of exactly when the fishermen in Labrador qualify for those benefits this year?

Miss MacDonald: Mr. Chairman, I would say to the Hon. Member that my understanding with regard to opening dates is that exactly the same practice will be followed as was used last year. Officials at Treasury Board informed the Department that this would go into effect as it did last year, and last year the beginning date for payments for people in Labrador was June 1.

Mr. Murphy: Mr. Chairman, I have a comment and then some questions for the Minister. My comment basically concerns the fact that the procedure we are going through at this time really does not represent a good parliamentary practice. I remember when the Liberal Government used to rush in with legislation at the last minute. The Conservatives, when they were in opposition, and the New Democratic Party, would agree to quick passage of the legislation because a deadline was coming up, and we were quite rightfully criticized by various groups who were concerned with the legislation.

It is of concern to me that just a week before the existing legislation comes to an end, we are extending that legislation without going through the proper parliamentary procedures. I happen to be a member of the Standing Committee on Labour, Employment and Immigration. I see the chairperson of that committee is in the House. The Hon. Member for Nickel Belt is also on that committee. Normally, legislation of this nature would be introduced in time so that it could go before the full committee for clause by clause study. Groups who are concerned with the legislation would have a chance to make presentations and unemployed people from the various economic regions of this country would have a chance to explain how the legislation affects them. They would have a chance to explain some of the problems they have encountered because the rates have changed over a period of time, although their unemployed status has not.

Mr. Manly: And it would have given Tory back-benchers something to do.

Mr. Murphy: It may also have been a very educational procedure for some of the new Tory back-benchers to understand how this legislation actually works. I understand we are rushing this Bill through in order to benefit the people who are affected by the variable entrance requirement, but my point is that there are a lot of people who have concern with this legislation who are not going to have the opportunity to appear before a Commons committee and, by the same token, we in the Commons are not going to have an opportunity to really examine the legislation in the depth which is necessary.

I would like to give two other examples of how rushing through things have hurt people, Mr. Chairman, if I may. The indication in the November 8 statement with respect to how severance pay and pension benefits were going to be considered under the UIC program was, with almost no consultation.

The community of Lynn Lake in my riding is facing a mine closure this year, about which I previously spoke to the Minister. The people in that community woke up November 9 and found that the rules of the game had changed. They had studied the rules which were in existence before the Minister of Finance introduced his economic statement of November 8. They knew that their mine was closing and they thought they understood what the rules of the game were. All of a sudden on November 8 this Government changed the rules, and that is going to affect these people. People working in the mine who are going to be laid off and people who are going to lose their teaching jobs, and so on, will have a difficult enough time facing their own economic future without the rules being changed, and it was done without them having any chance to have any input into those changes. Again we are not allowing at this time for that type of input.

I can also say the same thing with regard to the Challenge '85 program for students. We in my riding were very drastically and negatively affected by the program. The Minister of National Health and Welfare made the announcement on behalf of the Minister of Employment and Immigration and he explained that there were only 222 jobs which were approved for my riding under that program because of the new rules. In the past we had received approximately 40 per cent more in terms of money and summer employment through the old programs, but the programs were changed. I recognize that this is a new Government, but it was done quickly without the type of consultation and study by a House of Commons committee which was necessary.

We are again doing the same thing. I wonder why the Minister was not able to introduce this legislation a month ago so that we could have taken it to the Labour, Employment and