

*Adjournment Debate*

She went on to repeat that what they were trying to do with unemployment reform was to make the system fair and equitable.

The minister did not respond directly to my question and that is why I feel very strongly about coming before the House and putting the discussion on the table.

My supplementary question was to the minister. I asked her if she was telling us that she was really not aware of the horrible impact these measures would have on the unemployed and, if she was aware of them, did the government still allow incorrect numbers to be released. The minister responded by saying that she personally was responsible for the department that oversees Statistics Canada and she has confidence in Stats Canada's data. That was not what I had asked her. I had asked her if in fact she had allowed incorrect numbers to be released.

She said:

I also know that the data I just quoted you truly reflect the job creation situation.

It seems that this government is so enamoured with the McDonalds burger type of jobs they create that it becomes impossible to get them to speak about Bill C-21, the Unemployment Insurance Amendment Act. It is impossible to get them to talk about the impact of this act on the unemployed in the country. Indeed, what we find is that we are constantly being told about how many jobs have been created in Canada. When we try to talk about the Unemployment Insurance Act nobody is saying that there have not been jobs created in Canada. We might argue the degree or the quality of jobs, but we are not arguing whether or not jobs have been created. What we are arguing about is unemployment insurance and trying to get this government to talk about and think about the impact of the changes of Bill C-21, the impact on people in the country, men and women. I have all kinds of statistics I can throw out here today, but throwing around statistics does not address the issue of the man who is unemployed in Newfoundland, the woman who is unemployed in the Northwest Territories or the family with both adult workers unemployed in British Columbia, or in my own riding of Mission—Coquitlam for that matter.

• (1815)

I would like to address the question of an interim report called: *Regional Unemployment in Canada: A Nation Out of Balance*. That report came from the Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council. It was completed in November 1989 and released by the minister in February 1990.

I want to speak to this report because prior to this life as a member of Parliament, I sat for two terms on the Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council. The council is made up of 21 members. There are seven representatives from labour, seven from management and seven NGO representatives. I have sat through many a long meeting on that advisory council where we knocked heads and came out with a common theme representing the views of the labour movement, the corporate community including the Chamber of Commerce and bankers, and the views of the non-government organizations.

That advisory council came out with this report that was critical of the way in which the Department of Employment and Immigration addresses the problem of regional unemployment. The report states that decisions on behalf of communities are usually made in larger centres by people who are not familiar with the local needs and conditions. Regional development programs in particular have a dismal record of failure. But the effectiveness of federal training programs has also left the regions with large accumulated training needs.

The report goes on to say that for regions to assume greater responsibility for their own development, it will involve not only the efforts of the community but those of the three levels of government and other major institutions. This process will demand a devolution of power and decision making from the centre to the communities. This will probably encounter considerable opposition from an entrenched bureaucracy but it is a necessary step toward local revitalization.

I would hope, Mr. Speaker, that this is not a situation where yet another advisory council of the government is being muzzled but in fact a situation where a very thoughtful group of senior Canadians is taken seriously about the effects of unemployment, its impact on average, ordinary, working people who want to work and who