

od—the qualifying period refers here to the last 52 weeks since the last claim started, whichever period is started—who received more weeks of UI benefits, and again the weeks of benefits would include weeks where benefits are being paid or are payable. For example, weeks of disqualification for voluntary quitting are deemed to be weeks of benefit paid. In other words, this proposal would mean higher entrance requirements for people who receive more weeks of UI benefits than the number of weeks they need to qualify under the variable entrance requirement, that requirement at present in Nova Scotia being ten weeks.

Individuals who on their previous claims receive less than ten to 14 weeks of benefits, depending on where they live, would not be affected by the change. They would only be required to find the needed ten to 14 weeks of variable entrance requirements to establish a new claim. However, the penalty comes in areas where a person has been on an extended benefit period or has taken more weeks than their ten insurable weeks or variable entrance requirement.

In an area of high unemployment, where the entrance requirement is ten weeks, the maximum entrance requirement to requalify for benefits would be 16 weeks. In other words, there is a provision in this bill which will affect the repeaters in the same qualifying period, although the department officials have stated in committee, and in studies they have done, that approximately 30 per cent of the repeaters will be able to find additional weeks to qualify for benefits in the same qualifying period. The saving in Nova Scotia, excluding the exempted areas—and I notice that the hon. member for Central Nova (Mr. MacKay) represents an area which will probably be exempted, the proposed exempted areas being Cape Breton and northern Nova Scotia—will amount to a total of \$5.5 million. Under the proposed amendments, the total saving in Nova Scotia will be approximately \$46.2 million.

An hon. Member: What a terrible government.

Miss Campbell: That is the proposal for the coming year.

My concern, as I said, is that the adoption of Statistics Canada economic regions does not reflect the true unemployment rate in South Western Nova. As presently defined, these regions will create a real hardship to thousands and thousands of Canadians, in my opinion. Nova Scotia has five economic regions according to Statistics Canada. As I mentioned, two areas are exempted from the repeater provisions, namely, Cape Breton and northern Nova Scotia which includes, for instance, Truro which, I am sure most Nova Scotians would agree, is one of the higher income areas in the province. However, areas such as these will be exempted from the repeater provisions.

My constituency illustrates the problems which would be created by the amendment. In economic region "E", which includes South Western Nova, the unemployment rate in 1977 was 10.3 per cent. Therefore we would not be exempted under the repeater provision contained in the bill. However, statistics obtained from the UIC district office in Yarmouth, which represents Digby, Yarmouth and Shelburne, are as follows: the average number of beneficiaries per month in Nova Scotia in

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1977 was 39,382. For the same period, the average number per month at the Yarmouth district office was 4,339, approximately 11.1 per cent of the total number of beneficiaries for the province of Nova Scotia. However, the labour force for the Yarmouth district office, according to the 1976 mini-census, was 26,575 people. The percentage of unemployment at the Yarmouth district office, based on the average number of beneficiaries in 1977 out of the labour force in that area, was 16.3 per cent.

The total unemployment insurance paid out in 1977 for Nova Scotia was \$192,881,000. For the Yarmouth district office it was \$20,878,000, or approximately 10.8 per cent of the total paid out for Nova Scotia. However, the total population, using the district office figures, is only 8.8 per cent of the total population of Nova Scotia.

The above figures indicate that the UIC office in Yarmouth has an average unemployment of 16.3 per cent on a total labour force of 26,575. However, these statistics are overshadowed in economic region "E" by other areas, such as Lunenburg, which bring down the unemployment percentage of the region to the point of painting a badly distorted picture. The result is that this bill will disqualify, in my opinion, thousands of Canadians who would not be disqualified if they just lived on the other side of what is evidently an artificial boundary line.

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As hon. members are aware, many areas in the Atlantic provinces have been exempted from the harshness of this clause. In Nova Scotia there are two Statistics Canada economic regions out of five which are exempt because their levels of unemployment do not average below 11.5 per cent. As I already mentioned, these areas are Cape Breton and northern mainland Nova Scotia, which includes approximately 38.9 per cent of the population of Nova Scotia 15 years of age and over.

The constituency of South Western Nova falls in another economic region which is not exempted. This region has about 14.5 per cent of the population of Nova Scotia. However, in this economic region the unemployment insurance district office for most of my constituency, Digby, Yarmouth and Shelburne, is situated in Yarmouth. It represents about 7.6 per cent of the total population of Nova Scotia.

The economic base of the constituency of South Western Nova is solely dependent on the amount of fish caught, a bit of farming and forestry and, of course, the tourist season in the months of June, July, August, and part of September. Therefore it is seasonal employment on which the people have to depend. This area also has some of the lowest incomes in the province.

As I said, this provision, particularly the use of economic regions without any discretion, is harmful in its effect on the constituency. Because the economic regions used by Statistics Canada are inadequate in calculating the unemployment rate in a given area, the minister or the commission should have the power to make special regulations so that all regions in