

Supply

is a very positive aspect that has been accepted and endorsed by Atlantic Canadians.

As I stated earlier, there will be at least 45,000 additional people in Atlantic Canada who will now qualify for benefits. They are not getting benefits now because in most cases they are working less than the 15 hours presently needed to qualify.

In addition there is the new family support benefit, a family income supplement for low income families with children. This provision will allow claimants to earn up to 80 per cent of their insured income.

Those are three points but there are others. I could perhaps cite six or seven other provisions that are very beneficial to Atlantic Canadians which will offset some areas where without question some adjustment will be needed. We all recognize that we need to make structural changes to make the system an employment program as opposed to an unemployment program.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert, BQ): Madam Speaker, I must say that I was very disappointed and even shocked to hear the comments of the member who just spoke.

Throughout his speech, we had the impression that he feels the unemployed are lazy people and that making them hungry will somehow help create jobs.

A supermarket recently opened in my riding. It needed to hire 60 people, mostly for part-time jobs. Yet, 2,000 people showed up. It is not true that the unemployed are lazy. What is true, though, is that there are no jobs for people willing to work. Jobs will not be created by making these people hungry.

[*English*]

Mr. Wells: Madam Speaker, that comment is very much like the motion, a distortion of the true facts. That is certainly not what I said or implied. To even suggest it to me is an insult. I did not say that. I will not suggest it. The member should not even think it.

We all recognize that people who are out of work are not out of work by choice. At the same time the present system is not helping them. We are trying to bring in employment measures that will assist these people to get the tools and that will help industry and business create the jobs these people badly want.

Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury, Lib.): Madam Speaker, in support of my colleague for South Shore, I simply advise the member from the Bloc that we from the maritimes need not be told that unemployed people are not lazy.

• (1655)

I will speak to a number of benefits included in the minister's recent announcement. Probably the most important benefit concerns the fact that employment insurance will now be much more inclusive. There are estimates that up to half a million people who were not eligible to be included in the benefits of the unemployment insurance will be included for benefits under employment insurance.

I cannot overestimate how important that provision is because it will allow many Canadians inside the system who currently are on income assistance in the province of New Brunswick to qualify. In many cases they could not find sufficient numbers of weeks to work but could certainly find the number of hours necessary under this provision. There will be people in my province who will be able to qualify with nine or ten weeks of work who might have needed to find fourteen or fifteen weeks of work in the past. They will have access to the program by virtue of the fact that the industries in Atlantic Canada are very seasonal. During peak periods they can work long hours but they cannot extend the long hours over a large number of weeks. It is very important that it has a very progressive outcome by virtue of that.

THE ROYAL ASSENT

[*English*]

A message was delivered by the Gentleman Usher of the Black Rod as follows:

Madam Speaker, the Honourable Deputy to the Governor General desires the immediate attendance of this honourable House in the chamber of the honourable the Senate.

Accordingly, the Speaker with the House went up to the Senate chamber.

• (1710)

And being returned:

The Acting Speaker (Mrs. Maheu): I have the honour to inform the House that when the House did attend Her Honour the Deputy to His Excellency the Governor General in the Senate chamber, Her Honour was pleased to give in Her Majesty's name the royal assent to the following bills:

Bill C-93, an act to amend the Cultural Property Export and Import Act, the Income Tax Act and the Tax Court of Canada Act—Chapter No. 38.

Bill C-68, an act respecting firearms and other weapons—Chapter No. 39.

Bill C-61, an act to establish a system of administrative monetary penalties for the enforcement of the Canada Agricultural Products Act, the Feeds Act, the Fertilizers Act, the Health of Animals Act, the Meat Inspection Act, the Pest Control Products Act, the Plant Protection Act and the Seeds Act—Chapter No. 40.