

It was supposed to be new money for all regional development programs, and now the few opportunities, the few resources we had to create new jobs are being eliminated.

Earlier, I heard my colleague from Nova Scotia say people were abusing the system and that changes were necessary.

Mr. Speaker, people in the Atlantic region would prefer to work if we could at least give them some way of creating jobs that would then help them take advantage of training programs. However, it's no use training them if there are no jobs.

Mr. Speaker, I tell you that without a ticket, because it takes a ticket, by the time the workers are trained, VIA Rail will no longer be there. They will not be able to take the train to leave. Because that was also cut. Just in our area, the Province of New Brunswick, over 250 jobs will be lost because of the VIA Rail cutbacks. Add to that the 1200 jobs that we lost in the CN shops last year, although we were promised that they would not be cut!

Mr. Speaker, you understand why I must oppose this Bill, because, Mr. Speaker, this Bill is contrary to the best interests of my constituents, the people of Beauséjour. That is why I support the amendment of my colleague, the Hon. Member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Mr. Allmand), who wants to amend the Bill, so that Bill C-21, an Act to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act and the Employment and Immigration Department and Commission Act, is not now read a second time but is read a second time six months from today.

• (2200)

[*English*]

**Mr. Rod Laporte (Moose Jaw—Lake Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I rise to speak on this Bill with some unhappiness and discontent with the fact that we have to be debating it because it is going to wreak havoc on the people of this nation. This Bill comes from a Government which says it has compassion for Canadians, that it is caring of Canadians, and that it is acting in the interests of all Canadians. The Government is certainly not a friend of the underprivileged in this country, the workers in this country, the seniors in this country, and certainly not of students in this country. In fact, Canadians right across the land are very concerned about this Bill.

### *Unemployment Insurance Act*

In fact, with regard to students, a student by the name of Christopher Wayland from McGill University in Montreal, certainly nowhere near my riding, is so concerned about this Bill and is so fundamentally opposed to it that he made a point of contacting the House tonight to ask that his name be put on the record of this House as being publicly opposed to this Bill. That says a lot for Mr. Wayland and a lot for Canadians right across the land.

This Bill reflects the true agenda of the Government. To paraphrase an old saying, this is a Government by the privileged few, of the privileged few and for the privileged few. Twenty minutes is only time to barely scratch the surface of the effects that this Bill will have on Canadians.

I would like to talk about the Free Trade Agreement. Before the election the Government was stating that the Free Trade Agreement would have no effect on social programs, would create a level playing field on which our social programs would be secured, that they would be not touched. Yet this Bill has, in effect, lowered the standard of social programs, it has affected the unemployment insurance program. Our unemployment insurance system is vastly superior to the United States but this Bill brings us much closer to harmony with the U.S. The Government is quick to say that every sparrow that falls is going to be blamed on the Free Trade Agreement. Well I think a jumbo jet is crashing on the nation today.

Just to give two examples, in the lower mainland of B.C. where the unemployment rate is approximately 11 per cent, unemployed people formerly received 50 weeks of unemployment insurance and they will now receive 39 weeks of insurance. What a surprise to find that if you go south a few miles to Seattle you will find that unemployed workers in that area of that country receive 39 weeks of unemployment insurance benefits. Workers who quit or are fired from their jobs will lose seven to 12 weeks in benefits. Their insured earnings will be cut to 50 per cent from 60 per cent. This again is in harmony with the U.S. As the free trade Bill takes effect, as the free trade fall-out falls upon us, we find our playing field sinking down into the mire. This is exactly what the Government said would not happen.

I have been listening to the comments which some Members opposite have been making. I am appalled at some of the comments. The Member from South Shore (Mr. McCreath) indicated that there have been increased numbers of jobs and that this Bill will work toward increasing jobs. I do not know about his region of the country, but I certainly know that there are actually