

prosperous as Canada with, as the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) is so fond of saying, an economic performance that excels in the western world.

As a Newfoundlander, and also as a Canadian, it is a shock and a shame for me to be able to say that the rest of Canada does not know how terrible the situation is and that the Government does not want to do anything that will resolve that problem. Of course, we cannot vote against this legislation. But it is a drop of water where a bucket is needed.

The House and other Canadians need to be reminded that we in Newfoundland have an unemployment rate of twice the national average. When the national unemployment rate goes down the Government gets up and applauds itself and pats itself on the back, and usually at the same time the unemployment rate goes down in Newfoundland. Last year it went up when the Canadian rate went down. But it is always twice the national rate.

That is only part of the story. It is all very well to say that the unemployment rate in Newfoundland is 17 per cent. But when you look at the statistics another very important story can be told, and it is always left out when anybody talks about the unemployment rate and how wonderful it is. A very important figure that goes along with the labour force data is the participation rate. That rate tells us how many of those who are eligible to be in the workforce are actually considered by Statistics Canada to be in the workforce at all.

In looking at Newfoundland, the participation rate is 52.7 per cent. That means that 52.7 per cent of those eligible for work are considered by Statistics Canada to be in the workforce. Before I talk more about that, I will mention all the other provinces. In Nova Scotia the participation rate is 60 per cent; in New Brunswick it is 58.8 per cent; Quebec, 63.6 per cent; Ontario, 68.7 per cent; Manitoba, 66 per cent; Saskatchewan, 66.9 per cent; Alberta, 71.4 per cent; and British Columbia, 65.3 per cent. All across the country the participation rate in the labour force is higher than that of Newfoundland. Why is that? The reason is that there are no opportunities for people to have jobs.

Compared with the rest of Canada there is an unemployment rate that is twice the national average. More than that there are eight, ten, fifteen, twenty points difference in the participation rate of the Newfoundland workforce, which I call the real workforce, from other parts of the country so you have another potential of 15 to 20 per cent unemployment. It is not called unemployment by Statistics Canada because the people in that category are not actively seeking work. They have not had a job interview in the last three weeks.

● (1210)

It does not take much imagination to come to the conclusion that if someone lives in a community where there are no jobs, where the only source of employment may be the town hall, the fish plant or a construction project, that they are unemployed. They do not go from one door to the next asking "do

you have a job for me?" If there are jobs available they know by word of mouth. But these people are not in the labour force according to Statistics Canada.

Despite that, the unemployment rate in Newfoundland is at least twice the national average by official standards. There are more than 52 per cent who are interested in working, wanting an opportunity to use their talents and abilities, wanting an opportunity to support their families, to make money, to earn a decent living and have an opportunity to take advantage of the good things which this country is able to provide. It seems that this House, other Canadians and the Government, have to be reminded that Newfoundland and Newfoundlanders are a part of Canada. Newfoundlanders ought to have the same opportunities for employment and be able to use their talents and look after their families as the rest of Canadians. If this were a situation that existed in the Province of Ontario or in the Province of Quebec, there would be a massive government program to do something about it.

The situation in Newfoundland is comparable to the situation that existed in Canada during the depression. When there are national problems of unemployment we do have government action to provide solutions.

What do we have in the case of Newfoundland's very serious problem? We have legislation that says, "we recognize there are problems and if you manage to get 10 weeks work somewhere along the line we will let you collect unemployment insurance while in the rest of Canada people have to work at least 14 weeks. We will vary that rate". Obviously we cannot vote against that because this legislation is desperately needed. Whatever assistance the workers in Newfoundland can get is vital because it is the difference between spending the winter—in many cases, on welfare, or maybe not even qualifying for welfare if you are single and unemployed—and having a few dollars from unemployment insurance. The Government needs to eradicate this problem.

Looking at the Bill, and there may have been changes over the years, it seems that this 33-month period for this 10 to 14 week variable rate started on December 4, 1977. I assume in 1977 this provision was brought in. It is now 10 years later. Since this what has happened to the unemployment rate in Newfoundland, Mr. Speaker? It is still, even officially, double the national average. As I say, by looking at the participation rate it is easy to see, even by the statistics, that the rate is probably three or four times the national rate.

We need legislation to provide massive government assistance based on the unemployment rate that is keyed and geared to reducing that rate or at least reducing the difference between the rate of unemployment in Newfoundland and the Canadian average. Programs should be put into place to carry on until that national average is achieved, and we should compare annually the effect of programs on the unemployment rate. We would then have some recognition by the Government that the unemployment rate in Newfoundland is a national problem. It would give a signal to Newfoundlanders that they