

■ **ECONOMY**

Unemployment clock stops in Winnipeg

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WINNIPEG — Winnipeggers had the chance yesterday to watch the number of this country's unemployed tick upward, job-by-job, past the 1.6-million mark.

The National Unemployment Clock, part of a campaign to keep jobs in Canada sponsored by the Telecommunications Workers Union, was parked for several hours near Portage Avenue and Main Street. The campaign's black cargo van, with the red digital 'clock' mounted on the side, left Parliament Hill on May 6 en route to Vancouver, where the clock will remain after the tour.

The campaign wraps up June 8.

"The idea is to raise awareness and keep jobs in Canada," said David Rowswell, driver of the van the National Unemployment Clock is mounted on.

In addition to watching the approximate real-time number of Canada's unemployed tick up about every 35 seconds, members of the campaign urged passersby to sign a petition asking Prime Minister Stephen Harper and Labour Minister Rona Ambrose to work to keep Canadian jobs from being shipped out of the country.

"When you see the number it kind of puts things in perspective," said Winnipegger Allison Jones, who signed the petition. "It's important to keep as many good jobs in Canada as possible."

The clock will continue west today and stop in cities and towns along the way where campaigners will hand out information brochures, buttons and bumper stickers.

"The principle is good," said Winnipegger Jeff Bond of the clock and campaign. "From a business standpoint, it's not always going to be such a black and white issue, but even if the government can help with subsidies or any kind of non-trade negotiations to try to keep jobs here, we have to do it."

In its latest data from last month, Statistics Canada pegged the national unemployment rate at 8%.

More than 4,600 people have signed the petition so far.

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