

*Adjournment Debate*

Is the Government perhaps trying to mislead Canadians by telling them the tax will be 9 per cent, knowing very well that they intend to introduce a 5 per cent tax which would be accepted as a lesser evil?

In essence, Madam Speaker, my question is about fairness and equity. How can the Government be so sure of its economic performance, when its performance with people is so different? Why are so many workers in Quebec in poverty? How come my province has become the second poorest in the country? More than 50 Conservative Members (from Quebec) sit on the other side of the House, but what good has it done the province? My question is and remains: What does the Prime Minister intend to do to end the widening gap between rich and poor and how will he stop Quebec from having the highest rate of poor families in Canada?

[English]

**Mr. Bill Kempling (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Madam Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Employment and Immigration, I wish to respond in greater detail to a question of June 15 by the Hon. Member for Saint-Laurent.

The question dealt with the government's position on poverty. The best social program is a job, not just any job but a secure and rewarding one. A good job is also the surest ladder out of poverty.

The measures this government is proposing as part of the Labour Force Development Strategy will provide all Canadians, men and women, with the opportunity to acquire skills necessary to get a job and to climb out of poverty. Thousands of women have already benefited from the programs offered under the Canadian Jobs Strategy introduced by this government in September, 1985.

During 1987-88 more than 160,000 women, youths and disadvantaged workers participated in programs under the Job Entry Component of the Canadian Jobs Strategy. The increased emphasis on active spending under the Labour Force Development Strategy will further benefit women by providing them with the opportunity to acquire skills necessary to get a good job.

As part of the Labour Force Development Strategy, we are significantly increasing social assistance recipient programming. With the co-operation and participation of the provinces, up to \$200 million, an increase of 33 1/3 per cent, will be available for additional programming directed at improving the employability of social assistance recipients.

This additional \$200 million is targeted specifically at those who fall below the poverty line. This money will enable these people to undertake training and skill enhancement necessary to break the cycle of poverty. The new programs we are introducing will allow these people to trade their welfare cheques for a pay cheque.

The increased funding for social assistance recipient programming is significant. That is not all we are doing as part of the Labour Force Development Strategy.

• (1810 )

UI coverage will be expanded to workers who choose voluntarily to remain in the labour force beyond age 65. This will substantially enhance the income security availability to seniors.

I emphasize, Madam Speaker, that the changes we are making in the unemployment insurance program are modest in scope. Claimants who need UI benefits will continue to get them. Provincial welfare rolls will not increase significantly because of these changes.

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE—PROPOSED AMENDMENTS  
TO ACT—IMPACT OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS ON  
EMPLOYED

**Mr. Ron Fisher (Saskatoon—Dundurn):** Madam Speaker, I am asking about a response which I considered to be inadequate some time ago from the minister's office. My accusation in the question was that the changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act, Bill C-21, fell so far short of what was needed by Canadians as to be something which ought to be withdrawn and would receive very little support not only from the New Democratic Party but from people all across the country.

The response, as is usually the case, did not address the question at all but referred to how much training was going to be done, how those who were unemployed were going to benefit so much from the expanded jobs under CJS and how, in some cases, even people who are on social assistance would be receiving so much benefit because of the changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act, Bill C-21.