

*Review of Unemployment Insurance Act*

president of the Federation of Women Teachers' Associations of Ontario. I shall not read it. The federation represents 27,500 teachers. I have in my hand also a resolution from a much larger body, the Ontario Teachers' Federation, which has some 85,000 members. The Ontario Teachers' Federation makes four basic recommendations which are as follows:

1. The federation feels that if the government includes teachers as compulsory participants few, if any, would ever be in a position to derive benefits. Consequently, from a teacher's point of view, the federation would not accept unemployment insurance as true insurance.

2. The federation is prepared to accept the view that unemployment insurance is a welfare measure and, as such, the government should re-name it, should include all citizens, and should obtain the necessary moneys from general taxation revenue.

3. The federation feels that inclusion of teachers in the fund would be an unwarranted additional educational expenditure. If the annual contribution of each teacher were approximately one hundred dollars (forty-eight dollars for each of the teachers and the employer), the approximate cost in Ontario for approximately eighty-five thousand teachers would be eight million, five hundred thousand dollars.

4. The federation requests that if the government makes amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act it continue to include teachers under non-insurable employment.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order, please. I must advise the hon. member that his allotted time has expired.

**Mr. Enns:** Might I ask the hon. member a question? Would I be in order, Mr. Speaker? I realize that many of the hon. member's remarks were not immediately relevant to the motion. Since he raised the question of whether teachers should or should not be included, would he say whether he favours the inclusion of that group in the unemployment insurance fund? Should they or should they not be excepted?

**Mr. Hymmen:** Had I been allowed to finish I might have answered that question. Personally, I favour retaining teachers in the excepted category.

**Mr. F. J. Bigg (Athabasca):** Mr. Speaker, this resolution is welcome, particularly as it has been a long time since steps were initiated to change the Unemployment Insurance Act. The act, as its title suggests, provides insurance against unemployment. It does not work that way. I suggest that under the act a bonus is paid to some who are not employed and that the entire legislation ought to be revised. I support this resolution because,

[Mr. Hymmen.]

were it adopted, it would begin to revise the legislation.

The unemployment insurance legislation does not meet our needs. I accept some responsibility for this as a member of parliament because the act has endured in its present form for a long time. I submit that many suggestions of the Gill report ought to be implemented. I do not accept the report in its entirety, but I do submit that we ought to discuss it and try to arrive at some reasonable position with respect to it.

I submit that if the words "suitable employment" were omitted from the act, wherever they appear, the insurance principle on which the legislation is said to be based would be restored. When a man is said to have suitable employment it means that he has employment or work which he is capable of doing. I know that the unions will not agree with my contention. They feel that if a man is a carpenter the government has a responsibility to see that housing legislation or mortgage legislation is so tailored that the carpenter will have employment during all seasons of the year. I do not agree with that. The unions ought to co-operate with the government and ought to make sure that every available worker in Canada, regardless of his vocation, is employed. We have gone to ridiculous limits when we expect a man to work for six or eight weeks at the height of the fishing season and to be unemployed for the rest of the year. By taking out the words "suitable employment" wherever they appear the act will be changed in a way that will give it a true insurance function.

It may also be necessary to amend the act to cover those who are employed seasonally. Those who work in the woods of Canada can only work when snow is on the ground. Snow is needed in order that the logs may be slid along the ground and ice is needed to get equipment across muskeg.

• (5:40 p.m.)

If I followed the last speaker correctly he thought that school teachers should be exempted. My own feeling is that all those who work in the labouring field in certain categories should pay into the unemployment insurance fund, but only if they are able to draw benefits from their contributions. I should like to see the Unemployment Insurance Act tailored to encourage full employment. One way in which to do this would be to introduce a sliding scale of contributions. If a man worked steadily for five years, say, his contributions would be reduced by half.