

ing false statements about their availability for work. In our view, whether these allegations have any validity explicit recognition of these contingencies and the provisions of benefits tailored to these circumstances are good.

These additional benefits represent an adjustment in the economic security system to recognize the contingencies generated by a world in which women are a large portion of the labour force and in which a major segment of the population has no protection against interruption of earnings due to sickness.

#### 5. Unemployment Benefits for Interruption of Earnings due to Retirement

The case for the provision of unemployment insurance benefits for interruption of earnings due to retirement presents certain difficulties. Indeed, a number of witnesses fully in support of UIC benefits in the case of interruption of earnings by sickness or pregnancy expressed opposition to the provision of the proposed retirement benefits.

While in the main concern in the matter of sickness and pregnancy included interruption of earnings benefits related to a discussion of the type of program and vehicle appropriate for such benefits, the very existence of a valid contingency at the time of retirement was denied by several witnesses and briefs. It was maintained that if a need exists in the transition from work to retirement, it cannot be said to constitute an interruption of earnings.

A number of witnesses also drew attention to the fact that by accepting Canada Pension Plan or Quebec Pension Plan, an early retired person would have access to \$720—while if he did not retire, he would receive as much as \$5,000 in the first year.

#### 6. Claimant Assistance Benefits

The provision of claimant assistance benefits has come under criticism from several witnesses and for a number of reasons. For example, one labour organization expressed "strong reservation about the interviews" because in the past "claimants have been interviewed ostensibly to determine their availability but in fact to find some pretext for disqualification".<sup>32</sup> This line of criticism, however seems to represent an indictment of present procedures rather than reasonable criticism of a proposed claimant assistance program unavailable in the past.

The same critical approach was followed by another organization which stated—"We want reassurance that counselling will not be used to deny benefits to claimants".<sup>33</sup> Others spoke in the same vein. The United Community Services of the Greater Vancouver Area insisted

<sup>32</sup> Canadian Labour Congress. See *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, 2nd Session, 28th Parliament, October 6, 1970. Issue No. 20, Appendix A-11, p. 71.

<sup>33</sup> United Auto Workers. See *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, 2nd Session, 28th Parliament, September 22, 1970. Issue No. 14, Appendix "T", p. 130.

that the role of "helper" and "fraud detector" cannot be effectively combined.<sup>34</sup>

However, most briefs supported the claim that counselling is needed and that it is essential that UIC make counselling accessible to claimants.

#### 7. Coordination

While the proposal for greater coordination with the Canada Manpower Centres and other Government and Private Services was accorded considerable support, there were some expressions of doubt about the extent to which the goal would be reached. This spirit of scepticism was set forth by one group which criticized "the stress placed on coordination rather than integration between government departments".<sup>35</sup>

#### B. Comments

The proposed structure of benefits is aimed at correcting a major weakness of the present Act which is its restriction of monetary benefits to a limited range of designated causes of interruption of earnings.

The White Paper proposes to cover the entire information-cash-services range of benefits. It offers benefits related to the different types of contingencies. The result is a workable scheme.

Both the duration and the level of benefits and the form in which claimant assistance is proposed received general support. However, the integration of the proposed benefits into a composite whole resulted in some expressions of concern.

Some parts of the proposed system have engendered comments and remarks which suggested anticipated anomalies and incongruities in the functioning of the system.

1. Although coordination and integration will determine whether the proposed scheme would be more efficient, the "links with other government services" and other agencies require further clarification.

2. Although the level of benefits would appear to be adequate to cover non-deferrable expenses, a minority segment of the claimant population with very low income may be subjected to some hardship because of the transition. This group is small and economically diversified. It is estimated that the number of claimants with dependents earning less than \$40 per week would be less than 1.5% of the claimants with dependents. Unquestionably these persons need help. In our view it would be better provided by other Government services.

3. Although there was support in many quarters for the phase I benefit, the idea of a lump sum payment generated some concern. The question arose as to whether such a payment should be made in one amount

<sup>34</sup> See *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, 3rd Session, 28th Parliament, October 27, 1970. Issue No. 6, Appendix A-38, p. 104.

<sup>35</sup> See *Minutes of Proceedings and Evidence*, 3rd Session, 28th Parliament, October 27, 1970. Issue No. 6, Appendix A-38, p. 105.