

reduce the cost about which the Leader of the Opposition worries so much. Here I speak about the cost of financing the unemployed. Of course, the ultimate is to bring an end to the act entirely. In that way you will provide maximum incentive to work for the "lazy bums" who live on unemployment insurance.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, we could go all the way back to the 1930s when we had maximum incentive to work. We had riots in Winnipeg, we had to split up families, we had men riding the rails, we had bread lines: all of these were maximum incentives to work. That is one alternative, if the Conservative party is not concerned about finding an additional 72,000 jobs, and it would be very easy to do, if that party ever became the government.

As I have already said, the official opposition could move to broaden the definition with respect to a worker from eight weeks to 12 weeks, even though—and this is the shame of the suggestion—there are only 19,000 people in Canada today who are on unemployment with only eight weeks labour force attachment. Where is the abuse there? Where is the incentive to scheme and cheat to draw unemployment insurance, when it is a fact that there are only 19,000 collecting unemployment insurance who have as little as eight weeks attachment to the labour force?

A further interesting statistic is that people who are on unemployment insurance, with eight to 11 weeks attachment to the labour force, remain on unemployment insurance an average of 15.8 weeks, ranging from 18.2 weeks in Newfoundland—this emphasizes the regional disparity involved—to 13.3 weeks in Alberta. Further, those who qualify for unemployment insurance and who have more than 12 weeks attachment to the labour force remain on unemployment insurance for an average of 17 weeks, not 50 weeks.

Certainly, Mr. Speaker, we can eliminate unemployment insurance and save a lot of money. In that way we can give more money to the corporations, we can reduce personal income taxes. But we will also have to set up the bread lines once again. Or we can reduce benefits from 66 per cent taxable to 50 per cent. This would also save a lot of money. The only trouble is that people would then be drawing what they drew under the old act. They would have to supplement their unemployment insurance benefits with welfare and we would be adding \$100 million to the welfare bills of the provinces and the municipalities. In Toronto alone we would be adding 7,800 people to the welfare rolls if we did that. It was stated that was the number taken off the welfare rolls as a result of the new schedule of unemployment insurance benefits.

Further, we could save a lot of money by increasing the waiting period from two to four weeks. Would that be very consistent, coming from a party that once suggested we reduce it to one week, at a cost of \$176 million? I remember that party's amendment on that occasion. It was a humanitarian and a good one, if only we had had the extra \$176 million at the time.

Now we can go the other way and save money. We can shift the 4 per cent level at which the government takes over the financial obligation for the plan, thus assuming its responsibility for the level of unemployment reached as a result of the fiscal, monetary and other policies resorted to by the Department of Finance in an attempt to

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keep unemployment at its lowest possible level. We could change that to 5 per cent, thus shifting more of the burden on to the employers. Alternatively, we could shift it from 4 per cent to 3 per cent, placing more of the burden on the government and less on the employers. I think that would please some of my hon. friends in the far corner, Mr. Speaker.

Another very legitimate amendment which the Leader of the Opposition could propose is the elimination from the plan of fishermen who are self-employed. Would hon. members from Newfoundland get very upset if we changed the regulations to eliminate self-employed fishermen from qualifying for unemployment insurance? After all, this would be perfectly legal and consistent with the act; you pay unemployment insurance only to those people who are employed. But I do not think that would be very popular in the Atlantic region. The hon. member for Trinity (Mr. Hellyer) has talked about the fisherman who earns \$43,000 and spends the winter in Mexico. Mr. Speaker, 20 years ago the same fisherman used to go to the Bahamas.

Another amendment which the Leader of the Opposition could move would propose the elimination of the woodworkers who are self-employed and who are included in the act by regulation. That would reduce the number of people receiving unemployment insurance. That would save all kinds of money, but it would affect a lot of people in New Brunswick who are self-employed. In his terms, it might eliminate a lot of abuses; there may be a lot of abuses in woodworking. According to the *Financial Post*, one of the leading lumber companies laid off 287 people and a month later called the unemployment insurance office to get them back, but nobody showed up for work. The company promptly did what any good, red-blooded employer would do; they went running to the press, talking about the 287 lazy people who refused to turn out for work, having decided to live on unemployment insurance. I got their social insurance numbers and names and addresses and ran it all through the computer. I found that 14 of them were drawing unemployment insurance and the remaining 273 were working for the competitor, with better working conditions and better pay.

• (1730)

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mackasey: Another category is the truck owner-operator.

An hon. Member: Why don't you bring these forward?

Mr. Mackasey: The hon. member can move a motion when we bring forward the amendments to the Unemployment Insurance Act. That will eliminate a few more people from the rolls and save money.

Mr. Speaker, in conclusion, because I am a little over my time, let me say that when I resigned from the cabinet, one of the reasons I did not resign from the House of Commons was that I was determined to stay here and see that the reactionary forces in this House did not destroy some of the decent things in our system.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!