

**Mr. David Weatherhead (Scarborough West):** Mr. Speaker, in making some comments shortly before ten o'clock yesterday evening on the Unemployment Insurance Act, 1971, I was pointing out I was going to discuss some of the main points that came before the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration during our long hearings on the white paper on unemployment insurance last fall. I stated that the first point we should consider was the question of universality, whether all employees should be covered by unemployment insurance or not. Then, I went on to say that we had heard a great number of briefs on this subject, that some of the new groups, such as the Canadian Teachers Federation, did not appear to favour universality as far as their teachers were concerned. But other groups coming in for the first time, such as the nurses, did favour universality because some nurses are now finding themselves unemployed for the first time.

Continuing my remarks, I should like to say that some of the teachers are not happy at being covered by unemployment insurance, and Members of Parliament have been the object of a quite well organized campaign by some teacher organizations in recent months to make their objections known. They have every right to mount such a campaign, as has any other group or individual who wish to make their views known to the government and to Members of Parliament.

However, it was the committee's opinion, and my personal opinion also, that the contingency of interruption of earnings is not now restricted to certain groups in Canada, as it may have been in earlier years, and that therefore no employee should be excluded from coverage if it were possible to include him. Many of us, including myself, would like to see as a matter of principle the self-employed covered also in order that the sharing of the financial burden of unemployment be as widely spread as possible. So far, however, neither the unemployment insurance commission nor the government have been able to come up with any formula that would enable them to decide when a person who is self-employed could justifiably claim he was out of work. I note that in his remarks last night the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) pleaded for coverage under the Unemployment Insurance Act for the self-employed, but he did not say just how this was to be done or how abuses could be prevented.

Many tend to think that most of these 1,200,000 employees being insured for the first time are relatively highly paid people with very secure positions. However, more than one-half of these new entrants, including many working in hospitals and charitable institutions and many working for governments at the various levels, earn under \$7,800 a year at the present time. Teachers have been very secure in their positions in past years. However, with the introduction of the birth control pill, the strict financial restrictions being placed on school boards for the first time since the depression of the 1930's, and with the introduction of new teaching techniques via closed circuit TV, cable, etc., it would be a brave teacher who could be sure that his or her job is completely and absolutely secure for the next 20 years.

#### *Unemployment Insurance Act, 1971*

There are similar uncertainties in the public service at all levels. People in certain job categories are being let go for almost the first time, and the armed forces are being reduced in numbers and becoming more selective in personnel; and the same applies to other groups to a greater or lesser extent.

Although groups such as the teachers and public servants do have more risk of unemployment than before, it is true to say that they are still a very good risk as far as unemployment insurance is concerned. By including in the scheme these better risk groups and all employees earning over \$7,800, we will be able significantly to help the financing of the main reforms in this legislation—much higher benefits, shorter qualifying period, etc. This will help keep off welfare people who have contributed to unemployment insurance, often for a great number of years, but who are unfortunate enough to find themselves without work for perhaps the first time.

Many of the unemployed find themselves getting various small amounts, up to \$58 a week in benefits, and there is no way they can finance themselves for very long without many of them going on welfare. However, if the same workers who have paid into the plan for years get two-thirds of their income in benefits, which in areas like Toronto would mean that most would receive benefits of between \$75 and \$100 a week, then they could hold their heads high and get along without welfare for a considerable period of time. Similarly, the much shorter entry requirements of eight weeks for partial benefits and 20 weeks for full benefits, rather than the 30 weeks over a two-year period as before, will be of particular benefit to younger people who have a difficult time getting established in the work force, and who unfortunately make up a disproportionately large share of the unemployed.

After the tax deductible features are considered, the teachers and others being covered for the first time will be asked to pay a net of about 40 cents a week commencing on January 1, 1972, which will be increased to a net of about 80 cents a week once the plan is completely operative. In my personal discussions with teachers both at a recent teachers convention here in Ottawa and at meetings in various parts of my constituency, I have found them very reasonable and largely willing to be covered once they are made aware of the whole situation; and I believe this is the case with the other groups also.

Before leaving the subject of new groups who will be covered for the first time, my friend the hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Alexander) devoted considerable time in his opening comments yesterday to what he called the adverse financial impact on the local school boards of having to pay the employers' share of the cost of covering teachers under unemployment insurance. He recited some escalating figures in that regard for the next few years, and I must confess I did not jot them down. However, I believe my figures more or less agree with his and show a cost of \$3,600,000 to Ontario school boards in 1972 and a cost of \$6,500,000 in 1975.

I believe though that additional costs, Mr. Speaker, should be kept in perspective. It should be noted that the