

proposed "light" and "intensive" interviews of individuals by the Unemployment Insurance Commission, both from a practical point of view (in a mass program, particularly when unemployment is high) and because there is some confusion as to whether their primary purpose is to police the program or to help people. Controls are necessary, but "the basic test must be acceptance of suitable employment if it exists"; the opportunity for undesirable exercise of local administrative discretion should be minimized as far as possible.

(para. 21-28) Financing the Program: Contributions from the public purse to social insurance schemes are appropriate and desirable. Canada's unemployment insurance program has always recognized this principle, but the White Paper now proposes limiting the federal government's contributions to costs related to certain levels of national or regional unemployment. The Submission strongly questions the use of a benchmark of a 4 per cent national unemployment rate which may come to be regarded as the "normal" and acceptable rate and thus downgrade the first line of defense against unemployment - economic and manpower policies aimed at creating maximum employment opportunities. Another question raised is whether the resort to total general revenue financing at high unemployment levels and the acceptance of the principle of "universality" do not lead logically to the combination of unemployment insurance with, or its replacement by, some form of guaranteed annual income. The reciprocal effects of the two programs should be examined before decisions are made on the White Paper's proposals.

(para. 29) The Climate for Change: The satisfactory resolution of social problems depends on the will and conviction of the people as a whole. The Submission questions the White Paper's statement that Canada strongly believes in "a more equitable distribution of our national wealth and the fulfillment of the expectations and potential of all our people". A "widespread re-ordering of our values" is needed before our policies and programs can be truly effective.

II Specific Considerations

(para. 31-32): The widened coverage is excellent but inclusion of the self-employed in the unemployment insurance scheme is urged, both because of increasing unemployment risks to them and for reasons of community solidarity.

(para. 33-34): People receiving benefits from the Canada or Quebec Pension Plan but capable of and available for work should not be considered to have "voluntarily retired" from the labour force. If they have in fact done so, the proposed retirement benefit is appropriate.

(para. 35): The inclusion of the employees of "charitable organizations" in the unemployment insurance scheme is endorsed.

(para. 36): Provincial coverage of all employees should be compulsory; the constitutional block to this should be resolved.