

Unemployment Insurance Act

the St. John's, Newfoundland newspaper, *The Evening Telegram*:

Changes in UI Program? 'Nonsense', retorts Crosbie.

The federal government has no plans to make changes to the unemployment insurance program, Trade Minister John Crosbie said Thursday.

"It's complete nonsense", he replied to questioning by reporters at Hotel Newfoundland following a Progressive Conservative rally for Prime Minister Brian Mulroney.

But Mr. Mulroney was quoted by the Financial Times as saying the Tories will take another look at reforming the \$10.4 billion a year unemployment insurance system if it wins the Nov. 21 election.

Mr. Crosbie said that he had asked the prime minister about the report and he said no the government has no plans to make changes to the plan.

"You're damn right I asked him (prime minister) about it.

Once again, there is another broken Tory promise. The Government has broken its promises and has cut back on unemployment insurance benefits.

Mrs. Dobbie: We have not.

Mr. Speller: Of course, they have been cut back completely.

Mrs. Dobbie: They have not been cut back.

Mr. Speller: They have been cut back. The Government is using this money to replenish the programs it cut back over the last five years by \$700 million. Rather than using funds from general revenue as is normally the case, the Government is taking it away from the unemployed. I call this shameful.

This means that all workers will pay for training without any assurance that they themselves will benefit from that training. It means that labour-intensive industries will subsidize training for high-tech industries which are often capital intensive. It means that low-paid service workers will help pay for the training of high paid-high tech workers.

The Government is hypocritically using the pretext of adjustment to finance its deficit reduction plan at the expense of unemployed Canadians. The Prime Minister and his Government are taking away \$2 billion from unemployed Canadians. While the unemployment insurance expenditure reduction will be effective almost

immediately, the entry level training program will be phased in over a four-year period.

Under the present unemployment insurance program, workers in firms pay into a fund knowing that money will come back to them in the form of benefits if they become unemployed, sick or pregnant. Now, under this proposal, they have no assurance that money will be paid back or that any money will come back to them at all.

According to the program, for example, \$230 million will go for training activities in the private sector. Part of this money, \$65 million, is for human resource planning. This is a good thing and one wonders why it has not been going on over the last four or five years. Once again, money will be used from the unemployment insurance fund, money that was available for workers when they were laid off, to pay for the human resource planning.

A strong labour force development strategy depends on a sound full employment policy that supports research and development, post-secondary education and literacy initiatives. The more basic education a person has, the easier it is to train him or her. That is just common sense. Given that, in the near future, almost half the new jobs will require more than five years of combined education and training beyond the completion of high school. The Government should be developing a comprehensive full employment policy and increasing, not decreasing, its support for research and development, post-secondary education and literacy.

The Government has announced new training initiatives without consulting with the provinces and without any kind of mechanism to monitor this training. Without such consultation, the Government cannot satisfy Canadians that the training programs will meet the needs of the economy and that the quality and standards of the training will be high enough to meet the challenge.

The Government is shifting the financial burden to the provinces. This is clear throughout this Bill. The provinces will be required to extend their work projects in order for workers to become eligible for unemployment insurance benefits or will need to extend social assistance to those unable to find additional work to qualify for unemployment insurance. In either case, the prov-