

The UI program in Canada allowed us, in the best possible way, to redistribute to the unemployed some of the money earned by the workers and the employers. If the present government wanted to dismantle the UI program, it should at least have begun when it came to power in 1984, because then the economy was growing at an annual rate of 4 or 5 per cent and jobs were being created.

Honourable senators, what did they do in 1988, before the election? They reduced the unemployment insurance contribution rates of employees and employers, so that after the election and after the economy had started to slide and unemployment to rise they could say it was no longer an insurance system and we should find ways to control spending under that program.

I would like Senator Bolduc to tell us this: Before he finished his speech, he claimed that 54 per cent of UI payments went to people whose income was above the national average. I would like to know where he got his figures. Where do they come from? Is it from the Fraser Institute or some such source?

**Senator Bolduc:** They come from Michael Walker, and he is as good with figures as anybody.

**Senator Thériault:** Honourable senators, I wish I had more time to talk about other consequences of Bill C-113 on the Canadian economy. I will use the few minutes I have left to talk about unemployment insurance.

As I listened to Senator Bolduc, it seemed as if I were hearing the same speech Senator Beaudoin and Senator Poiras made, I believe, in 1990. It is the kind of speech you get from people who don't know what people who need unemployment insurance benefits are up against. That's the problem: people who have been either public servants or in the private sector for most of their lives don't know about the real problems in this country.

Without the unemployment programs we had for the past 25 years, there would be no one left in the Gaspé or the Maritimes. They would all be in Montreal and Toronto, trying to keep body and soul together.

Do you know what it's like in Montreal today? Until 1990, Canada's unemployment insurance program was the way to redistribute money to those who need it. Our program is the best in the world, and this government is in the process of dismantling it. They started in 1990, and again in 1993, and if God forbid you are still in power in 1995 and 1996, what will happen to all Canada's social programs?

Honourable senators, instead of listening to the Conservatives, I would like to take a few minutes to tell this house what Canadians think of this program.

In the January 24, 1993 edition of *La Presse*, we read the following headline:

"Ottawa fights the unemployed, not unemployment."

[English]

The *Financial Post*, December 9, 1992:

"New unemployment insurance changes under a microscope. Proposals an 'empty gesture,' critics charge."

The *Montreal Gazette*, December 5:

"For those looking for work, tough times just got tougher."

The *Toronto Star*, December 7:

"Why Tories' UIC plan will reduce productivity."

The *Canadian Press*:

"Penny-pinching pogeey."

The *Globe and Mail*:

"Changes to UI harm workers, critics charge."

The *Toronto Star*:

"Hitting the unemployed no way to lead. The real radicals are in Ottawa with their drive for a brave new Canada."

Again, the *Toronto Star*:

"A brazen attack on the weakest."

[Translation]

The *Montreal La Presse*, January 19, 1993:

"Unemployment insurance: Attack the cause, not the victims."

*La Presse*, January 19:

"The Bar Association condemns unemployment insurance reform."

[English]

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The *Montreal Gazette*:

"UI changes potentially explosive."