

Unemployment Insurance Act, 1971

policy," which is a good policy, and simply say we are moving the other way.

The minister said we would save in the order of \$80 million from the Canada Assistance Plan by including this program, so the government's contribution is becoming less and less. The government is providing more welfare and is paying less. Even that 20 per cent of 16½ per cent which my hon. friend from Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) so carefully calculated is being taken out. The government is thrusting the burden on the people coming into the scheme now and is asking them to pay out of proportion to their risk. The minister nods his head. Let me ask him what sort of sleight of hand he has used to justify what he has done. He is now including more people. He is lowering the premium. He is reducing the government's contribution and is paying higher benefits. If the people who are being added are not to be taxed—that is what it is, a tax—out of proportion to the risk they represent, how does the minister work this financial miracle?

Mr. Mackasey: I wonder whether the hon. member would like the answer now, or when I am summing up tomorrow evening. I have an intriguing thought that I can increase the benefits, lower contributions and everything else and do all the things the hon. member has suggested. The point is that I am applying the insurance concept by pooling risks. I know people coming into the plan will be contributing to the total risk, and I am sure the hon. member as a good left-winger would agree with the concept that they should be their brother's keeper and help each other. Basically, this is what we are asking teachers to do.

Mr. Saltzman: I am not quarrelling with being my brother's keeper. The minister is making a very Tory-like argument. He wants to tax less and pay more. How is this to be done? Admittedly, the minister is increasing the benefits and reducing the premium because he is pooling the risk. There is only one conclusion: the new people coming in will be paying more than they are receiving. Why do we not say it that way? Really, this is

the crux of the teachers' argument. They will incur risks, of course, but we are not being frank about their position. They are being taxed in excess of other people who pay into the unemployment insurance fund. I believe this is so, because I do not know how else the minister can work it out. He has proven his brilliance in economics according to his fiscal policy and I would not wish him to lose that stature by arguing that it is otherwise, that is, that it is not a fact that the new people coming in will pay more than they will receive.

We can argue that a new situation has arisen and many people who were included in the past, who might logically have considered themselves as not prone to some of these risks, are now prone. There is some truth in this argument and I believe even the teachers would admit it. However, I believe if we are to tax the teachers more heavily than other people—because ultimately it becomes a tax—we should at least have the courtesy to be frank and not suggest that they are coming into the program and will receive benefits equal to their contribution.

I have spoken privately to many teachers who have said that if they are to be their brother's keeper and pay a tax, then everybody else should pay the tax. If this program is to have a welfare connotation, part of which is to be paid by premium and another part to be paid out of tax revenue by people according to their ability to pay, then I say we are moving backward. Even the government's contribution is being withdrawn. The whole thing is being thrown back on the payers of the premium and the new people coming in. I suggest that this is unfair.

Mr. Speaker, may I call it ten o'clock?

Mr. MacLean: Mr. Speaker, will the minister confirm that we will continue this debate tomorrow?

Mr. Mackasey: Yes, Mr. Speaker. I hope we might finish it by tomorrow evening.

At ten o'clock the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.