

have been paying unemployment insurance premiums at reduced rates will have to pay more because they will have to pay the full shot for the next year.

● (1740)

The hon. member for Nickel Belt will remember the discussion we had some years ago when we were asked to include teachers under the unemployment insurance fund. At that time there was a great furor as teachers felt they would not be among the unemployed because as far as they could see into the future there would always be a need, as indeed there is, for good teachers, since teachers were simply not turned out from our colleges of education without jobs being available. I am a bit sad to say that the prognosis they formed at the time has not held true. In the year 1973, 1,800 and some odd teachers were the beneficiaries of unemployment insurance. More and more people across the country are coming under this scheme, so I would hope again that this would be taken into consideration by hon. members.

Premiums under both these schemes I mentioned are determined by the individual's income level. Under the Canada Pension Plan, which applies to all Canadians other than Quebec residents, the charge is 1.8 per cent of gross income up to a maximum of \$6,600. However, the first \$700 of income is exempt, making the top premium 1.8 per cent of \$5,900, or \$106 a year. Next year the percentage and exemption remain the same, but the maximum pensionable earnings will increase from \$6,600 to \$7,400, so the maximum premium will go up from \$106 to \$120.

Under the unemployment insurance scheme Canadians at present are paying 1.4 per cent of their gross incomes up to \$8,840, which makes the top premium \$123 in 1974. This year the maximum insurable earnings will increase from \$8,840 to \$9,620, and the maximum premium, which the hon. member will no doubt make a note of, will go up from \$123 to \$134.68.

However, quite a few Canadians have been paying less than the 1.4 per cent, so the increase will be relatively larger for those people. Those are the people who were not covered by the unemployment insurance plan before the scheme was extended to cover everyone at the beginning of 1972. Such people were phased into the scheme gradually, paying reduced rates in 1972, 1973, and in 1974, unless they changed jobs. In each of those years the rate was moved closer to the standard percentage, and for 1975 the difference will be wiped out.

One might ask what the cost of unemployment insurance is to the country. Let me refer to a news release of May 28, 1975, in which it is stated:

Manpower Minister Robert Andras has promised to study a proposal which could bring 18 more weeks of unemployment insurance benefits to jobless victims of the auto slump.

I draw attention to this because in many ways my constituency is affected just as is the constituency of the hon. member for Nickel Belt. We have many members of the United Auto Workers in St. Catharines, and this information was of particular interest to me.

The news release further states:

—unemployment benefits for the first four months of this year totalled \$1.2 billion, an increase of almost 50 per cent over the \$830 million total for the first four months of 1974.

### *Unemployment Insurance Act*

If projected for the rest of the year at present jobless rates, the total benefit cost of the program this year would be about \$3.5 billion—far more than the 1974 total of \$2.116 billion.

I just wonder how the suggestion in this bill would fit into this scheme. We were not given any figures by the hon. member, but undoubtedly they would be forthcoming at a later time when this bill got to the committee. I give the hon. member the benefit of the doubt in that regard.

The news release further states:

Increased unemployment this year with a resultant larger number of claims for benefits and a higher level of payments due to increased earnings are among factors that will push the total up.

Manpower Minister Robert Andras told the MPs that in 1975 the country will face the highest level of unemployment in 14 years.

Again this prognosis saddens me, but it is one which we must consider and check to see how things develop.

The news article then states:

For the Unemployment Insurance Commission this means substantially increased demands will be made on both its administrative and financial resources . . .

In the first four months of the year, the jobless rate ranged from a low of 6.7 per cent in January to 7.2 per cent in both March and April.

It seems that the people who must apply for unemployment insurance benefits are affected in more ways than one. I have addressed myself to the problem, if you will, in respect of a man or a woman who has been employed for a long period of time and then has to apply for social benefits. To me it is a natural duty or responsibility of every able person to look after himself or herself, in so far as it is possible, and where this is not possible I feel it is incumbent upon society to look after its own.

If, through inadequate legislation, the ambitions of the unemployed person are removed, his dreams are shattered, and his strength is stifled, then we as a nation will have to pay the price, and a high price it will be, because we are depriving ourselves as a group of the many productive years such people would have as citizens, workers, and contributors to society.

What is the reaction of a person who is unemployed for an extended period of time, particularly to his physical makeup? Naturally there is worry about the support of the family, meeting financial commitments, and this is not conducive to quick recuperation or a desire to get out and on the job. Quite to the contrary, in some cases this can worsen the claimant's condition and bring about a series of other ailments including ulcers, stomach and nervous disorders, insomnia and low morale. We do not want any of these things among our citizens because these things can even affect the health of the immediate family.

**An hon. Member:** What was that about not talking it out?

**Mr. Parent:** My hon. friend asks about talking it out. I would hope he will bear with me for a few more minutes.

**Mr. Rodriguez:** About five seconds.

**Mr. Parent:** I have a few more points to make and I am sure they will be beneficial to you when you present the case to the committee.