

meetings we have had with their responsible representatives, and to the many hours we have spent exchanging views and ideas. Now, I think the dialogue with the teachers centres more around regulations, and ways and means by which the plan can help them under certain circumstances.

I found that statistically almost 70 per cent of teachers are women, and they have absolutely no maternity coverage at all under the present collective agreements. We propose to provide unemployment insurance benefits to those people in the work force who are temporarily without earnings as a result of maternity. This is quite consistent with progress in an advanced industrial society. It is not revolutionary, because many countries around the world have already incorporated this feature into their plans. This is a way by which we can provide some security for the person who must retire from the work force in order to have a child.

I think that before we get too smug about women in the work force, we should realize it is a sad commentary that at least one million women in the Canadian work force are in it not because they want to buy a second automobile or a coloured television set but because their income means the difference between poverty and survival. When, in such instances, a woman is deprived of her income as a result of maternity, this creates a terrible hardship. I am hopeful that drawing unemployment insurance, after a two weeks waiting period, for at least 15 weeks will help the working mother.

Another reason for the proposed increase in benefits stems from the fact that many Canadians today drawing unemployment insurance must also draw a welfare cheque in order to support themselves and their families. There are very many Canadians who just manage to survive on two cheques, their unemployment insurance cheque and their welfare cheque. I do not want to bore the House with a great many statistics at this stage, but when the legislation is being examined by the committee we can provide full statistics for hon. member's who may be interested in them.

By increasing unemployment insurance benefits substantially we will affect savings of some \$80 million under the Canada Assistance Plan, \$40 million to the federal treasury and \$40 million to the provinces. At this stage I am not going to bother breaking down the amount with respect to each province. This depends on the rate at which they pay out welfare, but the increased unemployment insurance benefits will mean that for the first time many Canadians will not have to live on two cheques.

Further, Mr. Speaker, the increase in benefits will postpone the day when people chronically unemployed must turn to welfare if they have no other sources of income. It can be said that the benefit structure has been developed by people who care about people. The argument that this will breed laziness, that it is catering to lazy people, is an argument that should not be raised in this chamber. But, Mr. Speaker, it is an argument that we hear too frequently. It is said that people are inherently lazy. That has not been my experience. Tests made in

Unemployment Insurance Act, 1971

New Jersey indicated that even people living on a guaranteed income, everything else being equal, will seek work if at all possible. In fact they prefer to work rather than live on a guaranteed annual income, and I do believe that the overwhelming majority of Canadians in the work force would prefer a job rather than unemployment insurance or welfare, if they have that choice.

Universality, Mr. Speaker, will make it possible to reduce the contributions per week. At the present time a person earning \$100 a week pays \$1.40, and incidentally has no tax deduction for that \$1.40 if perchance that person never draws unemployment insurance. It is now proposed that the rate be adjusted to somewhere between 80 cents and 92 cents, depending on the statistics that we are now finalizing. In any event, there will be a fairly substantial drop from the \$1.40, and in addition the contribution will be tax deductible in the same way as are medical expenses.

Perhaps I am rather disjointed in my remarks, Mr. Speaker, because I am not following my text closely, but one thing about which I am most excited is the financing of the plan. What we propose to do in the main, is to limit the cost of the plan, up to a particular threshold which I will discuss in a moment, to the employer and the employee. The question of collections and that type of thing will be transferred from the Unemployment Insurance Commission to the Department of Revenue. In other words, on his T4 slip a person will receive a record of his contributions for tax purposes, and also for tax purposes a record of what he received. But what intrigues me about our format, so far as financing is concerned, is that the employer and the employee both will be paying their share when unemployment in the country is under the level of 4 per cent. This is the threshold that we have decided, and in a little while I will explain why it has been set at 4 per cent and not 3 per cent or 5 per cent, above which the state will contribute. But to that point, the employer and the employee will finance the plan.

Once again, and perhaps this has been due to lack of communication on my part, there has been the mistaken idea circulated that people with eight weeks contributions paid will get 44 weeks benefit. I have heard this said on radio and television by some well meaning people. It has also been said that a person with 20 weeks attachment in the work force will draw 52 weeks benefit. This is not the case. What a person with eight weeks attachment, between eight to 15 weeks attachment, will be eligible for is benefit for 18 weeks, and the person with 20 weeks attachment will draw 25 weeks benefit.

At the end of the eighteenth week when this normal benefit has run out, the probability of the person being re-absorbed into the work force will be assessed according to basic criteria, and part of the criteria will be the rate of unemployment in the country and the rate of unemployment in the specific region in which the person lives. It is logical to expect that with a 2 per cent unemployment rate, a draftsman in Toronto or an engineer in Newfoundland has a better chance of being absorbed back into the work force than if the unemployment rate were 5 per cent, 6 per cent or 7 per cent.