

*Unemployment Insurance Act, 1971*

● (1630)

What will happen in the court? A judge will sit on that case and he will say that if there is reasonable doubt, then the Minister of National Revenue (Mr. Beatty) is wrong. We will go through this entire procedure for two years and at the end a federal judge will say: "There is doubt here because these are the facts". Meanwhile, what have you done? You have put all these people through all this misery, and the Minister gives a simple answer. She said: "The company made an error". That is what is wrong with the direction of the Government. It is trying to cut back on unemployment insurance. The Government does not want to give unemployment insurance to the fellow going to school. The Government is not going to correct that. The Government will not do what part of this Bill says. The Government is going to save money in the unemployment insurance fund. The Government will cut back and will look good to some of the employers in the country. The Government is going to look good to people who say that everybody on unemployment insurance is lazy. That is what is going to happen.

As I said before, what should happen is that anybody who wants to up-grade himself or herself and attend a trade school or a course of instruction should be able to draw his or her unemployment insurance, because as it exists today half the people in the class are drawing unemployment insurance and the other half are not.

*[Translation]*

**Ms. Carole Jacques (Montreal-Mercier):** Mr. Speaker, I am very pleased to have the opportunity to express my views on Bill C-221. I must congratulate my colleague for introducing in the House this Bill to amend the Unemployment Insurance Act. With the proposals he has set out, we have the opportunity to examine closely the said Act and the way it is applied to the Canadian people.

Today I will only talk about the proposed amendments to section 39 which sets out the requirements a claimant must meet to receive normal unemployment insurance benefits while attending a training course recognized by the Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission.

Mr. Speaker, we are talking now about the use of the Unemployment Insurance Fund for innovative purposes, a provision of the Act which has been in force since 1977.

In order to be able to assess the impact of the proposed amendment to section 39, I think, Mr. Speaker, that it is essential to understand fully what are those innovative uses I have just mentioned.

During the next minutes I intend to make a summary of the objectives of section 39, in its present form, and to explain how the provisions are applied.

Under the innovative uses of the Unemployment Insurance Fund, trainees who receive unemployment insurance benefits can continue to do so while they participate in programs

designed to improve their employability. The purpose of section 39 of the Unemployment Insurance Act is to simplify the provisions relating to income support as far as the claimants who are attending occupational training courses are concerned.

This process supports the following objectives: first, to accelerate professional re-entry of the claimants; secondly, to multiply the training opportunities for the claimants; thirdly, to mesh the objectives of the Unemployment Insurance Act and of the National Training Act for claimants. Fourthly, to increase the number of manpower training courses offered to the unemployed, taking into account the needs of the labour market.

Trainees who receive an income supplement from the Unemployment Insurance Fund belong to two different categories: those who attend training courses approved under the National Training Act, and those who attend approved classes at their own expenses or at the expense of a province or some other agency. Trainees may receive unemployment insurance benefits during the training session and six weeks thereafter in order to look for a suitable job.

Supplementary allowances to live outside their home, to look after dependents, to travel or to commute may be paid in accordance with the National Training Act or from funds earmarked for the mobility program. These supplementary allowances cannot be paid to those who finance their own training.

Selection and recommendation of trainees is done in the usual way by employment counsellors using the normal process for information gathering.

Trainees entitled to unemployment insurance benefits lower than the training allowance they would receive, can receive other benefits to bring the total to an amount equivalent to the training allowance.

To receive benefits under section 39, the trainee must be eligible to unemployment insurance benefits. Furthermore, he or she must be selected by an employment counsellor for an approved training program. Trainees which are sent to an approved vocational training course at their own expenses are entitled to unemployment insurance benefits as long as they have not exhausted their entitlement and the course is geared to the needs of the labour market.

Trainees who pay their own way must attend courses in trades of national or regional importance. Provisions have been established by members of target groups. Trainees can also attend language classes if their lack of knowledge of one or the other official languages prevents them from finding employment.

The total amount allocated under section 39 for every calendar year is established by order in council. Maximum payable benefits as well as unemployment insurance premiums are revised every year. In 1984, the maximum weekly benefit was \$255; in 1985, it is up to \$276, an increase of 8.2 per cent.