

insurable employees are those who earn less than 20% of the maximum weekly insurable earnings or less than 20 times the provincial hourly minimum wage, whichever is less. Coverage, contributions and benefit entitlement cease at age 70.

Employers and employees absorb the cost of initial benefits and administration; the employer rate is 1.4 times the employee rate. The government share is confined to the cost of extended benefits and the excess cost of initial benefits resulting from a national unemployment rate greater than 4%. There is no fund and employer and employee contributions are adjusted yearly. In 1973 the rate of employee contributions was \$1.00 per \$100 of insurable earnings with a maximum of \$1.60 a week. The Department of National Revenue, Taxation collects the contributions. Persons formerly not contributing either because of their occupation or by virtue of being over the salary ceiling are paying a preferred rate for the first three years. For those who had been excluded because of their occupation, the preferred rate is portable. However, persons formerly excluded because of the salary ceiling pay the preferred rate only as long as they remain with the employer they were with on January 2, 1972.

Under the new program, the duration of benefit is not determined solely by how long a person has worked. A claimant can draw benefits for a maximum of 51 weeks depending on his employment history and prevailing economic conditions, providing he has contributed for at least eight weeks in the last 52 and he is available, capable and searching for work. Persons with 20 or more weeks of insured earnings (a "major labour force attachment") are eligible for a wider range of benefit that includes a pre-payment of three weeks of regular benefit for work-shortage lay-offs, benefit payments when the interruption in earnings is caused by illness or pregnancy, and three weeks retirement benefit for older workers.

Sickness benefit is available for a maximum of 15 weeks for persons with a major labour force attachment whose earnings are interrupted by illness, injury or quarantine (excluding workmen's compensation). If a person is taken ill while on regular claim, sickness benefit is available but the combined duration of benefits during the initial benefit period cannot exceed 15 weeks.

Maternity benefit is available for eight weeks before confinement, the week of confinement and six weeks after, to women who have had a major labour force attachment. They must also have been part of the labour force at least 10 of the 20 weeks prior to the 30th week before the expected date of confinement.

Retirement benefit, available for three weeks, is paid in a lump sum to claimants with a major labour force attachment who are 65-70 years of age and who have signified they have left the labour force by applying for the Canada Pension Plan or the Quebec Pension Plan, and to persons over 70 years of age. The benefit is paid without a waiting period and without regard to earnings or availability.

The benefit rate for all claims is two thirds of average insured earnings in the qualifying period to a maximum of \$107 a week in 1973 and with a minimum of \$20 a week. For claimants with dependents and whose average qualifying earnings are equal to or less than one third of the maximum weekly insurable earnings, the benefit rate is 75%. During later stages of benefit all claimants with dependents draw benefit at 75% of qualifying earnings subject to the \$107 maximum. The maximum insurable earnings and, therefore, the maximum benefit are subject to annual adjustment based on an index calculated from earnings of Canadian employees.

Income from employment in excess of 25% of the benefit rate is deducted. In the case of sickness and maternity, proceeds of wage-loss policies are deducted after the waiting period. All work-related income is deducted both during the waiting period and after the waiting period has been served.

The statistics in Table 8.27 summarize the Unemployment Insurance Commission's activities in the years 1968-73. Figures prior to July 1971 are affected by the Unemployment Insurance Act of 1955, which is described in the *1973 Canada Year Book* p 352.

To assess the impact of changing economic conditions on the insurance program, current operational data, such as claims filed and processed and payments made, are collected and published monthly by Statistics Canada. Current claims and payment data are useful for administrative purposes and are also a source of information to the public regarding financial and other aspects of the program. In addition to the monthly data on the operation of the Unemployment Insurance Act, detailed data on persons employed in insurable employment and benefit periods established and terminated are compiled annually and published in *Benefit*