

unemployment. If the hon. member would care to examine the statistics, he would find they support what I have just said.

#### ACTION TO FIND JOBS FOR UNEMPLOYED

**Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. In view of the fact the whole of the country does not just circle around big "TO"—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**An hon. Member:** He does not know his geography.

● (1520)

**Mr. Muir:**—would the minister make special arrangements to see that the Manpower Offices in many other parts of the country, where many people are unemployed and where unemployment is drastically high, will do their utmost to find jobs for people who cannot find jobs? Would he also entertain the idea of bringing before the cabinet more plans and efforts to provide industry in those areas where there are no jobs and people are desperately and seriously trying to find jobs?

**Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, as to the first part of the question I think I did indicate, again in my statement, before the Miscellaneous Estimates Committee our plans to convert all the CMC's to job information centres by early 1975. As to the second part of the question or representation, I have total confidence in my colleague, the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion, and in the many other programs that are trying to do exactly what the hon. member wishes to see accomplished.

#### AVERAGE BENEFIT AND PERIOD OF PAYMENT

**Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Verdun):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. In light of the suggestion that unemployment insurance is in some way contributing to the inability of employers to obtain workers—

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Mackasey:**—has the minister any statistics as to the average income per hour of the unemployed and the number of weeks they are on unemployment insurance?

**Some hon. Members:** Order paper!

**Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, as is well known, the average weekly pay from unemployment insurance benefit is \$68, and the average person is on unemployment benefits for between 17 and 18 weeks. I do not think there is any doubt by virtue of that average, with the top ceiling of \$107 per week only involving about 13 per cent of the claimants, that the money is going to the people in the lower income bracket.

#### Oral Questions

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. We are running short of time. The Chair will recognize the hon. member for Fraser Valley West and the hon. member for St. John's East, and perhaps then call orders of the day.

#### LEVEL OF BENEFITS COMPARED WITH MINIMUM WAGE AND WELFARE PAYMENTS

**Mr. Mark Rose (Fraser Valley West):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the minister whether he has statistics to confirm that the minimum wage level, welfare payments and unemployment insurance benefits are all about on the same level and that level is the poverty line?

**Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, I would be very interested in examining the details of that question. Right now I do not have readily available in my mind statistics that would support or deny the hon. member's suggestion.

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#### POST OFFICE

##### ALLEGED HOLDING UP OF DELIVERY OF FAMILY ALLOWANCE CHEQUES

**Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Postmaster General if he can tell the House whether any post offices across the country are holding up December family allowance cheques because the envelopes also contain references to the new Family Allowance Act which has not yet passed through the full parliamentary process, and can he tell the House when these cheques will be released by the post offices?

[Translation]

**Hon. André Ouellet (Postmaster General):** Mr. Speaker, post office employees deliver mail as soon as it is received. I can assure the hon. member that it is not the custom of the Post Office Department to delay intentionally mail delivery.

[English]

**Mr. McGrath:** In view of the fact that I know of one post office in the country where family allowance cheques have been held up for three days on the instructions of the Minister of National Health and Welfare—I am talking about St. John's, Newfoundland—may I ask how long these cheques will be held by this post office, and can he tell the House when in fact the cheques will be delivered?

[Translation]

**Mr. Ouellet:** Mr. Speaker, I shall inquire on this case, but I have serious doubts as to the accuracy of the hon. member's remarks.