

Unemployment Insurance Act

tabled may have the effect of complicating that situation. He has now said that employees of certain boards, commissions and crown corporations will be defined as provincial civil servants. That is fine in the provinces which decide to bring the civil servants in, but in those provinces that decide to leave civil servants out they are excluded from unemployment insurance coverage. So I suggest it may be necessary to take this regulation back to the drafting board and have a further look at it. The minister shakes his head. I always enjoy the movements of the minister's head, whether they are lateral or vertical. But I remind him we were assured in the committee that all this had been attended to. Yet it became necessary for the minister to clarify this point today.

I submit that still further consideration has to be given to the position of provincial employees generally. Speaking as one who believes that unemployment insurance coverage should be universal, I hope the minister will do everything he can to achieve that purpose, one which he said, when he brought in the bill, was his purpose also.

May I endorse what was said by the hon. member for Hamilton West about the unfortunate delays which are taking place. I know that the minister and the Unemployment Insurance Commission officials like to tell us that they are dealing with millions of people and that the number of delays represents only a small percentage, but a small percentage in this instance involves quite a few people. The number from whom we hear is very large and I think that something has to be done to speed up the handling of unemployment insurance claims.

The only other remark I should like to make is one that we in this group feel is extremely important. I hope the minister will come before the House within a few days with a new or clarified definition of income for the purposes of the Unemployment Insurance Act.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): It is our experience that it is the way in which income is being defined that is the most serious fault in the administration of this act. Many hundreds, perhaps thousands of workers, are being denied benefits to which they feel they are entitled because certain income is regarded as income for the purposes of the act. I hope that the tabling of this regulation today is a forecast of another one regarding the definition of income which will be tabled in a few days.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Gérard Laprise (Abitibi): Mr. Speaker, this is a case where we might say that all things come to him who waits. We have just heard a statement that could have been made yesterday, if the House had so allowed. In fact, the statement is rather brief and contains only one section of the regulations concerning the Unemployment Insurance Act.

I thank the hon. minister for informing the House of this provision of the regulations, pending their full publication. The statement enables us to see a little better the situation of provincial employees.

However, there is something wrong in the regulations. For instance, employees such as teachers or hospital workers who, for all practical purposes, will never receive any unemployment insurance benefits, will have to con-

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

tribute to the unemployment insurance fund. On the other hand, other workers—and here I believe the responsibility lies with the provincial governments—such as employees of the Quebec Departments of Roads and of Public Works, who for the most part are not on a full-time basis—for instance, they do not work during the winter—cannot receive any employment insurance benefits because they make no contributions to the fund.

Such is the ridiculous part of the situation, Mr. Speaker. I think we should engage in further negotiations with the provinces so as to enter into an early agreement likely to cover the workers that I have just referred to.

In conclusion, I would like to suggest to the minister that, in the administration of the Unemployment Insurance Act as regards claims submitted by the unemployed, the delays between the application and the time when they draw benefits are much too long. Even though the minister often says that 98 per cent of cases are dealt with according to regulations, it takes at least five or six weeks to process requests for benefits and that is far too long. I think we ought to find ways to reduce the delay between the end of employment and the time when the claimant draws his benefits.

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[*English*]

MANPOWER**TABLING OF REPORT ON RESULTS OF TRAINING PROGRAM, 1970**

Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I would like to table in both official languages, under the provisions of Standing Order 41(2), a report on the Canada Manpower training program, results of training for the year 1970.

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● (2:20 p.m.)

IMMIGRATION**SMUGGLING OF ALIENS FROM CANADA INTO UNITED STATES—REQUEST FOR UNANIMOUS CONSENT TO MOVE MOTION UNDER S.O. 43**

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I would like to propose a motion under Standing Order 43. The pressing and urgent circumstances relate to the inability of government immigration laws and policies to cope with serious current problems, particularly the continuous illegal entry of many aliens from or through Canada into the United States with the participation of organized criminal elements. If unanimous consent is given I would move, seconded by the hon. member for Edmonton East (Mr. Skoreyko):

This House, taking note of the failure of existing immigration laws and regulations and the refusal of the government to propose changes, which has resulted in many abuses and particularly large-scale smuggling of aliens from or through Canada to the United States, urges that immigration laws and regulations be referred to the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration to inquire into the above practices and recommend suitable changes.