

*Oral Questions*

**Hon. Herb Gray (President of Treasury Board):** Madam Speaker, I believe it is well known that in some cases there are additional workload demands for programs like unemployment insurance, and in other cases there are new programs. However, I would be happy to get more detailed information for my hon. friend and get back to him as soon as possible on this.

## MANAGERIAL PAY SCALES

**Mr. Don Blenkarn (Mississauga South):** Madam Speaker, is the true reason for the increase in the number of management positions because the Government does not want to comply with the six and five requirements, because it can pay managers up to \$88,000 a year and it is limited in other positions to \$50,000 a year?

**Hon. Herb Gray (President of Treasury Board):** Madam Speaker, I reject completely the premise of my hon. friend's question. We are applying the guidelines of the six and five program as established by this House, very strictly. I am glad to see my hon. friend's continued support of the six and five program.

\* \* \*

## UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

## PAYMENT OF PREMIUMS COVERING HORTICULTURAL WORKERS

**Mr. Gus Mitges (Grey-Simcoe):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. In a unilateral and unfair action the Unemployment Insurance Commission is forcing horticultural employers and employees to pay Unemployment Insurance premiums for part-time employees receiving less than \$250 per year, or where an employee works less than 25 days a year. Would the Minister not agree with the Canadian horticultural industry that this decision is totally unrealistic and unfair to such employers and employees, and will he take it upon himself to negate this regulation and reinstate Section 16(1) of the Unemployment Insurance Act which dealt with this matter in a fair and equitable manner?

● (1430)

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Madam Speaker, while the Hon. Member may not, I think many Members of this House would agree that agricultural workers, who are on the lower end of the income scale, deserve the same amount of protection under the unemployment insurance system as do other workers. I would not want the Hon. Member to think that, just because the philosophy of his own Party does not recognize the needs of workers at the lower end of the scale, we would allow that course.

I would indicate to the Hon. Member that we are not taking any unilateral action at all. In fact we have been involved in constant discussions with the Horticultural Society and other groups to work out ways in which this particular program to ensure proper income security protection for horticultural

workers can be maintained. Those negotiations are going very well, and I think the kind of statement made by the Hon. Member only interferes with them.

\* \* \*

## PUBLIC WORKS

## FUTURE OF CANADIAN FORCES BASE CHATHAM

**Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy-Royal):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Public Works. The Minister will remember CFB Chatham and the disclosure that the Government intends to close that base out and the subsequent unemployment that is bound to create in the region. He will recall that that region is now suffering from unemployment figures of in the vicinity of 20 per cent to 40 per cent.

Can the Minister advise the House, has he been approached by the Minister of National Defence with the suggestion or recommendation that the Minister of Public Works take under his wing the future of CFB Chatham and, if so, what has his response been to that suggestion?

**Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of Public Works):** Madam Speaker, it is a well known fact that the Minister of Public Works inherits a number of bases and buildings, some of which he is very happy to receive and others which turn out to cause him considerable headaches. This is a process which has happened in the case of other military bases, but I have not been approached. I understand the Department of National Defence intends to keep part of this base in operation. In fact it intends to keep the runway and some other components in operation, as has been explained by my colleague, the Minister of National Defence.

**Mr. Corbett:** That is a most interesting revelation, Madam Speaker. I would make a recommendation that the Minister of National Defence deny the press reports then that he has indeed been in contact with his colleague who is supposed to be responsible for New Brunswick and the affairs of that Province, because these are certainly contradictory statements.

## REQUEST THAT MINISTER MEET LOCAL COMMITTEE

**Mr. Bob Corbett (Fundy-Royal):** Madam Speaker, my supplementary question to the Minister follows on the fact that the CFB Chatham Steering Committee has made a request to the Minister of Public Works for a meeting with him, and his colleague from Northumberland-Miramichi has asked for action, not statements of principle. We know where the Minister's principles lie, but will he give this House and the Steering Committee a commitment now that he will meet with them in an effort to resolve the problems that he, as the Minister responsible for New Brunswick, should be addressing himself to for the benefit of those unemployed people and those who are about to become unemployed due to decisions taken by this Government?