

or employment in non-insurable employment and not because of commission delays.

In short, people are now able to deal with the UIC by mailing in their forms which, if properly filled out, result in speedy payment, also by mail. In addition, callers no longer have to come to the office to make personal inquiries. Those who report to the office do so voluntarily to obtain general information.

Forms are available at the Post Office, Canada Manpower Centres and in some union halls.

I should like to shorten this statement. Statistics kept by the commission indicate that claimants are paid consistently within three weeks of the date of initial claim for 97 per cent or more of claims. This is an even higher proportion than last year. For example, on January 12 only 2.8 per cent of the claims filed in the third previous week were still pending and only 12 claims of 4,458 were still pending from the fourth previous week.

I have other similar statistics which I shall skip over. On February 23, the last total I have, only 1.6 per cent were unsettled at the end of three weeks and 6 of 6,407 were pending from the fourth previous week.

Both official languages are available to claimants in the Toronto office. In addition, several of the employees speak a number of the more common languages in the Toronto area. Efforts will be made to identify these employees in order to facilitate the problems of new Canadians who are not yet fully conversant in either of the official languages. It is not unusual for 10 to 12 languages to be spoken at one time or another by claimants, admittedly creating a problem in communication. Nevertheless, the commission has always been ready to do what it can to secure help in interpretation as required.

Several information publications are now being written in several languages to assist in educating insured persons concerning unemployment insurance requirements and how to go about filing and receiving unemployment insurance.

• (2:30 p.m.)

The Toronto office is presently located on Dufferin Street in temporary premises. It is the intention of the commission to split into two separate offices in the area of Toronto, one of which will be located on St. Clair Avenue and the other in the west end of the city. This will be done before next winter.

Unemployment Insurance Office Conditions

I have already arranged for the physical facilities of UIC offices across the country to be made more comfortable for applicants and the general public visiting these offices.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize again that the UIC is perfectly capable of coping with current workloads of claims. Both its staff and its systems are such that they can meet any emergency which may arise because of particular circumstances in an industry or an area. There will always be cases where for lack of complete records or particular circumstances, such as for one claim following a previous claim, a longer time is required to process the payments. These cases are serious for the people affected and everything possible is being done to minimize this problem.

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, we appreciate the statement the minister has just made concerning conditions in the Unemployment Insurance Commission office in Toronto. I also thank the minister for sending me a copy of the statement.

The very fact that there is an increase of 700 new claims and of 8,000 active claims over the figures in the same month a year ago illustrates the serious unemployment situation in Toronto. I cannot understand nor, I am sure, can the people of Toronto, why a city the size of Metropolitan Toronto has only one unemployment insurance office and that a temporary office on Dufferin Street. Surely a city the size of Toronto needs at least two offices, and I am glad the minister is making arrangements to open a second office. However, here we are locking the door after the horse has been stolen. This should have been done long ago for a city the size of Toronto.

The office of the UIC is doing much to relieve the serious situation. We are glad to hear that more telephones have been installed and we are pleased to learn that new forms have been introduced. The forms which claimants have had to complete in the past could only be figured out by a Philadelphia lawyer. Too many questions were put in too small a space poked full of holes for computers purposes. In many cases the holes went through the words printed on the cards, which made questions difficult to understand. No wonder people had all kinds of trouble in filling out these forms. I am glad the minister has revised them.

The minister said that only a small percentage of applicants have not had their unemployment insurance claims paid. The percentage may be small but the number of people is