

Oral Questions

by computer, and the interviewing techniques and methods used by manpower officials. If people have not had the opportunity of being offered a job, I think it is grossly unfair to cut them off by computer. I will come to my question, Mr. Speaker, because I see you are becoming a little anxious. In light of the minister's reply yesterday, and since it is virtually impossible for 40,000 people to be interviewed by 400 benefit control officers, what methods are used to declare people ineligible?

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, UIC claimants are referred to manpower, and where jobs are identified as being available in the area the benefit control operation goes to work. With regard to the impossibility of conducting interviews, benefit control officers can interview, and are charged with the responsibility of interviewing, six people a day, or 30 a week, or 270 over nine weeks, which is the period under discussion regarding the disqualifications that I mentioned the other day. Since there are some 360 benefit control officers, simple multiplication would indicate the ability to conduct 97,000 interviews.

[Later:]

Mr. Rose: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order in respect of a reply given to the House a moment ago by the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. I have had an opportunity to do some mathematics, and I would not want the minister to be accused again of misleading the House. I think that the figure he gave the House would certainly be possible provided all of the 350 benefit control officers were named to a particular area rather than spread across the country working every day where disqualifications—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I would not think the hon. member would suggest that this is a point of order. It is a point of debate between members. If he has a further question he might be recognized in a moment, but I wonder whether it is really a point of order. It does not sound like one. In any event, he might like to indicate how it is a point of order.

Mr. Rose: Mr. Speaker, I thought I had stated the point of order a little earlier. Because of the need for clarification, and rather than having the minister accused of misleading the House, I should like to ask him whether or not all 350 of these benefit control officers were indeed working in the Toronto-Hamilton area where the disqualifications occurred, and did these benefit control officers actually interview 40,000 people before the claimants were disqualified?

Mr. Andras: In answer to the final portion of the question, I cannot guarantee that they were all interviewed. That was the subject matter of a question put to me yesterday which I said I would investigate. As to the figure I was quoting, I was talking about the potential in the same way as I think the comment about the absolute impossibility of doing it was raised yesterday. Both are conjectures, but one is certainly as sound as the other. Ninety-seven thousand potential interviews would, theoretically, certainly look after 40,000 disqualifications. As to the final part of the question, I will investigate that and let the hon. member know.

[Mr. Rose.]

MANPOWER**PLACEMENT PRIORITIES—DESIGNATION OF DIRECTIVES AS REGULATIONS**

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Minister of Justice. I should like to ask the minister whether he would advise his colleagues that where there has been exercise by any person of a power to govern delegated by a statute, whether it be in the form of a directive or an order, it is a regulation and must be considered as such, and that this House expects the law to be observed.

[Translation]

Mr. Raynald Guay (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Justice): Mr. Speaker, I take notice of this question and the minister will answer it early next week.

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• (1130)

[English]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE**METHOD OF OPERATION OF BENEFIT CONTROL OFFICERS—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT**

Mr. John Lundrigan (Gander-Twillingate): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. Is it the policy or practice of his department in carrying out the blitz operation that has been conducted across the country to assemble the BCO's from various centres in one area—that is not birth control officers but benefit control officers—to carry out a centralized operation in that area with the express aim of hitting people hard and in a hurry in order to get at the most people as quickly as possible?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, having regard to the implication in the question I would have to say no. Generally speaking, in the larger centres the benefit control operation goes on continuously. However, where there has been identified the existence of particular jobs in a smaller centre and the existence of people on claim who have skills in these jobs in that smaller centre, then benefit control officers might be sent from another area to conduct the interviews. That is the way the operation works and that is the way I tried to describe it the other day.

Mr. Lundrigan: Can the hon. gentleman indicate the approximate relationship between the number of people who were disqualified and the number who, having gone through the appeal procedure, were later reinstated, and whether in fact it is in the neighbourhood of 80 per cent reinstatement, thereby really calling into question the value of the blitz procedure the minister has instigated?

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, I question the figure of 80 per cent. I cannot give precise details, but I want to make this point which I made in a statement the other day. Sometimes disentanglement is made on the basis of failure to be able to produce proof of search for work where there is work in existence in a community and entitlement is res-