

insurance purposes. Would the minister explain why this change was made and what advantages there are for the fishermen?

Mr. Starr: The change in the regulations was made in November, 1958. Many changes were made at that time to try to remedy the anomalies which existed. In doing that we created anomalies, also, and one of them is this one and right at the moment we are considering it.

Mr. Pickersgill: I am glad the minister is doing so.

Mr. Brassard (Lapointe): I have two questions I should like to put to the minister. I understand that many civil servants employed by the provincial governments have been brought by those governments within the benefits of the Unemployment Insurance Act. I should like to know how many provinces have placed their employees within the scope of this act, and what are the conditions for taking such action?

Should Quebec not be participating, I wonder whether the minister would consider, writing a friendly letter to a friendly government, not to put the hammer over the heads of the Quebecers but to invite them to participate in the benefits of the Unemployment Insurance Act.

Mr. Starr: The civil services of all the provinces except Quebec are included, and I have taken note of the hon. member's suggestion.

Mr. Pickersgill: Will you file it?

Mr. Hellyer: I wonder if the minister could now give me the information about the Winnipeg office for which I asked him the other evening.

Mr. Southam: Coming from a rural constituency I am interested in the problem of unemployment insurance in relation to farm labour, and I thought I should make a survey to find out information which I could pass on to the minister.

Several weeks ago I wrote to all the reeves and councillors in my constituency asking them pertinent questions and seeking their views on this matter. I have had a good cross-section of opinion. All of them with the exception of one, Councillor Reid, have written me saying that they feel that farm labour should come under the Unemployment Insurance Act. I just thought I should pass this information on to the committee, feeling this is a good cross-section of opinion in this particular area.

Mr. Starr: I should like to reply to the hon. member for Trinity and to congratulate him on the very good speech he made to this committee on the matters with which he dealt last week. This has to do with mechanization in

the prairie region. An installation on a trial basis was made last year and the results obtained have justified the continuation of the experiment. Hon. members will appreciate that with the complexity of this operation and the speed which must be achieved and maintained several bugs were encountered. These are however being overcome and it is hoped that the final results will not only provide the best service possible to claimants but will also lessen costs. Because this is still in the nature of a pilot installation, the commission is not in a position to determine what the ultimate staff requirements will be in the regional and local offices of the prairie region at the present time. It is expected there will be a saving in this connection.

The machine installation consists of multi-control reproducing punches and standard interpreters in all mechanized local offices, which are 14 in number. The yearly rental for this equipment is \$37,800. At the regional office there are 24 machines consisting of Univac electrical computers, tabulators, collators, verifiers, sorters, etc., and the yearly rental for this equipment is \$50,520. The total rental for equipment is \$88,320. Special forms are required for use in this equipment and the cost for 1959-60 is estimated at \$140,000. These forms, of course, replace standard forms used in the non-mechanized offices of the unemployment insurance commission. Furthermore, if and when mechanization becomes universal, forms will be purchased at somewhat lower prices than for the pilot operation.

Mr. Rapp: Mr. Chairman, I should like to take advantage of this opportunity to bring to the attention of the Minister of Labour the case of the farm labourer and in particular I should like to plead for the western farm labourer. Our agricultural industry in the west is rapidly becoming mechanized and because of this it is difficult to obtain labour to run the machinery. It takes a skillful labourer to run these machines. As a result of mechanization the farm labourer has become a seasonal worker. I believe the farm labourer is the only one not now covered by the Unemployment Insurance Act. The fisherman is a seasonal labourer and he is covered by this legislation.

I should like to thank the minister for informing us that studies and research have been done along these lines but may I point out to him the urgency of having the farm labourer brought under the provision of the Unemployment Insurance Act.

Mr. Hellyer: Mr. Chairman, first of all I should like to thank the minister for his complimentary remarks about my earlier effort on the subject of rehabilitation of