

*Inquiries of the Ministry*DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE—REDUCTION IN  
MAN-HOURS AS A RESULT OF UTILIZATION  
OF COMPUTERSQuestion No. 535—**Mr. Robinson:**

How many man-hours have been saved as a result of the utilization of computers by the Department of Agriculture during each year since computers have been used?

**Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture):** Records are not maintained in such a manner as to provide this information. The computer is used extensively in the Department as a tool for research, much of which would not be possible without this facility.

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE—LAY-OFFS AND  
HIRINGS AS A RESULT OF USE OF COMPUTERSQuestion No. 536—**Mr. Robinson:**

As a result of the use of computers by the Department of Agriculture how many employees have been (a) laid off (b) hired?

**Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture):** (a) Nil; (b) 228.

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

## UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

## EXTENSION OF BENEFITS ON INTERIM BASIS—TERMINATION OF PAYMENTS DURING WINTER MONTHS

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of Labour. Are he and the government giving any consideration to a measure to extend the period of benefits under unemployment insurance on an interim basis in view of the difficulties we face this winter? I ask this question because a few weeks ago he indicated he preferred employment to unemployment insurance benefits, which we all accept, but since the government has recognized the importance of increasing benefits, is the government now prepared to recognize the importance of extending these benefits on an interim basis?

**Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Labour):** Mr. Speaker, because of the particular season of the year, from December 15 on we have what are known as seasonal benefits which make it much easier to extend the duration of the normal benefits that we would expect to be in force at other times of the year. I feel we have enough latitude in that regard because of the seasonal benefit feature which permits a relaxation of the normal attachment to unemployment insurance, and that we should proceed in the proper manner, by increasing the benefits rather than by extending the duration of the benefits.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Has the minister had prepared an estimate of the number of persons on unemployment insurance who will have to go off it in the course of the winter months because their benefits will expire even with the seasonal arrangements he has suggested?

[Mr. Olson.]

**Mr. Mackasey:** Mr. Speaker, the estimate of the number of people on unemployment insurance is at the best an estimate which is usually made by the Unemployment Insurance Commission in conjunction with the Dominion Bureau of Statistics and is usually based on the experiences of previous years. Whether or not people will be removed from the rolls during the winter months depends, of course, on the type of work attachment and the number of stamps presently in the person's book, but it is not the policy of the Unemployment Insurance Commission to apply these rules with any degree of severity in the winter months, particularly in respect of those who come under the seasonal benefit arrangement.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Mr. Speaker, would the minister obtain from the Unemployment Insurance Commission the commission's estimate of what the situation may be and would he at a convenient opportunity give this information to the House?

**Mr. Mackasey:** I certainly can inquire whether it is at all possible to obtain this information with any degree of accuracy. Of course it is based on the labour attachment of the claimants when they first come into the plan. It is difficult to inform the House with any degree of accuracy but at least I will try.

## INTEGRATION WITH MANPOWER OFFICES

**Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington):** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of Labour. In view of the fact that the Unemployment Insurance Commission offices are separate from the Manpower offices, would the minister advise the House whether he is taking any steps toward co-ordinating or integrating these two departments?

**Hon. Bryce Mackasey (Minister of Labour):** The degree of co-ordination is not to be measured by the physical presence of Manpower and the Unemployment Insurance Commission in the same building. I would say we have never had more co-ordination or co-operation than in recent months.

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## MANPOWER

EXTENSION OF UPGRADING PROGRAM—  
ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

**Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. Has the government taken a decision yet on the extension of the manpower upgrading program which is complementary to the government plan to increase unemployment insurance benefits? If so, can he state whether a plan has been devised to allocate these funds by provinces?

**Hon. Otto E. Lang (Minister of Manpower and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, the part of the decision that has been taken in this regard is well known to the House. No further decision has been taken.

**Mr. Speaker:** The hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway.