

Inquiries of the Ministry

have already taken steps in anticipation of the predicted lay-offs due to the model changes. We will do everything possible to reduce the 2 per cent of claims that are not processed as expeditiously as all of us, including the Minister of Labour, would like to see them processed.

UNEMPLOYMENT INCREASE—TRAINING AND
RETRAINING OF YOUNG PEOPLE—
PAYMENT OF ALLOWANCES

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration arising out of the questions on unemployment. In view of the fact that by far the largest group of the unemployed are very young people between the ages of 14 and 19, would the minister inform the House how soon we may expect the changes in the law and regulations affecting training and retraining and the payment of allowances to those persons obtaining retraining so as to remove the three-year waiting period for allowances and the other obstacles to the training and retraining of young people?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I shall not enter into a dispute about the statistics of my hon. friend, although I draw a slightly different interpretation from the unemployment figures than he does. I would say, however, in respect of his question that, as he knows, it is a most fundamental question relating to the distribution of available funds among the work force capable of taking training. At present consultations and research are being carried on with the provinces. We expect advice from the National Advisory Council on Manpower and Immigration. If any change is indicated, we do not feel it would be wise to make a fundamental change until we have had the best possible advice from these two sources. In other words, I do not expect a decision at an early date.

Mr. Lewis: In view of the fact that, if my memory serves me right, some weeks ago the minister indicated that changes in the rules along this line were being contemplated, does the minister's answer now mean that such changes are not being contemplated but that he is waiting for some advice from somebody?

Mr. MacEachen: No, Mr. Speaker. I should like to check that recollection of my hon. friend. We have under very active considera-

[Mr. Mackasey.]

tion changing another rule with regard to the manpower training program, namely, the length of time during which a person may take training, and we have made some other changes. But with regard to this very basic change, no decision will be taken at an early date and not until we have the most complete information we can obtain.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion a question. I am sure he must be disappointed that the figures in respect of employment in the Atlantic provinces are lower than they were a year ago. Does he feel that this is due to any failure on his part or rather that it is due to the arrogant and brutal policies pursued by the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance?

Mr. Speaker: Order. The hon. member for St. John's East.

UNEMPLOYMENT INCREASE—SUGGESTED
EMERGENCY PROGRAM FOR QUEBEC
AND ATLANTIC PROVINCES

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, this question is for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. In view of the fact that the program announced by the minister last week will not take effect in time to meet the current crisis, is the minister prepared to implement a program such as the winter works program to cope with the seriously high rate of unemployment in the province of Quebec and in the Atlantic provinces, which forecasts indicate will be even higher for the month of March?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, even if we were considering something like the winter works program it could not be implemented overnight. As a matter of fact, I believe we can achieve, through our special areas program, at least as much as could be done with the winter works program, and as quickly, and I see no point in seeking another formula at present.

[English]

UNEMPLOYMENT INCREASE—ADVANCING OF
PUBLIC WORKS PROJECTS IN
SASKATCHEWAN

Mr. S. J. Korchinski (Mackenzie): I wish to direct a supplementary question to the Minister of Public Works. About three weeks