

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, the International Nickel Company has advised officials of my department that production cutbacks are not anticipated at this time in the Sudbury area. Consequently, no lay-offs are expected. I am assured by company officials that press reports regarding expected lay-offs and cutbacks are entirely without foundation.

Mr. Rodriguez: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I did not ask the minister about lay-offs but about work force levels.

Mr. Speaker: Order. I hope we do not get involved in another point of order. The hon. member might like to ask a supplementary and he will be recognized for that purpose, following which I will recognize the hon. member for Richmond.

Mr. Rodriguez: In view of the fact that I did not ask the minister about lay-offs but about projected employment and production levels, would the minister please answer the question?

Mr. Andras: Mr. Speaker, I will take the hon. member's representation under advisement and reply later.

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[Translation]

UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

INQUIRY RESPECTING APPLICATION OF SECTION 106 OF ACT

Mr. Léonel Beaudoin (Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration.

Since section 106 of the act is difficult to enforce in many offices of the Unemployment Insurance Commission, could the hon. minister indicate whether he intends to brief commission employees on the provisions of section 106 of the act so that they may co-operate with the department to improve the situation of many unemployed?

[English]

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I will take that question as notice.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Rimouski wants to ask a supplementary question.

Mr. Eudore Allard (Rimouski): Mr. Speaker, can the minister say according to which decision the Unemployment Insurance Commission officers attach more importance to the high pressure enquirers who try by every means to catch applicants napping instead of helping them reintegrate the labour market?

[English]

BENEFIT CONTROL—REQUEST FOR ASSURANCE NO DISENTITLEMENT WITHOUT PERSONAL INTERVIEW

Mr. Heward Grafftey (Brome-Missisquoi): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question with regard to the

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investigation just mentioned by hon. members opposite. Can the minister now assure the House in regard to the unemployment insurance investigations that nobody who is receiving unemployment insurance is disqualified unless he has had a personal interview with one of the officials at a UIC office?

Hon. Robert K. Andras (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, an unemployment insurance benefit recipient can be disentitled to unemployment insurance if he is not fulfilling his obligations under the act. The benefit control operation, as I indicated in a statement several weeks ago, when it goes into operation involves a personal interview, but there can be disqualification arising from other reasons.

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WELFARE

POSSIBLE USE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS FIRMS TO PUBLICIZE WHITE PAPER ON POLICY RATHER THAN GOVERNMENT AGENCY

Mr. J. M. Forrestall (Darmouth-Halifax East): Mr. Speaker, may I address a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare having to do with whether or not the minister or his office in a very direct way have engaged a number of public relations firms across the country for the purpose of publicizing his release tomorrow of the white paper on welfare policy. If this is so, why did the minister's office not use the existing instruments within the government service for this purpose?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the department's information officers, when they do work in the regions of each province, have undertaken to organize an information session for regional newspapers. They are assisted by experts in that field to ensure that newspapers and information media can obtain the required information.

[English]

Mr. Forrestall: So that I may properly understand the minister, is he telling the House that he has not engaged outside public relations firms for the purpose of carrying out what should normally be a departmental activity?

[Translation]

Mr. Lalonde: No, Mr. Speaker. My answer clearly indicated what the situation was.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Is the hon. member rising on a supplementary?

Mr. Forrestall: Yes, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker: Before recognizing the hon. member for Scarborough East, the Chair will recognize the hon. member for Dartmouth-Halifax East on a supplementary.

Mr. Forrestall: May I ask the minister whether he considers this to be an ethical method? Why is he, like his colleagues, seeking partisan support for programs that