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PRIME MINISTER

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT AND SUNDAY TRADING

The Daily Mail claimed that: "a loophole in the benefit rules opens the way for the jobless to get Sunday work without it affecting their dole payments. The expected boom in casual jobs would be the biggest ever boost to Britain's black economy."

There is a potential problem here but not nearly as big as the Mail claims.

There is no problem for supplementary benefit: SB payments take account of all earnings, provided they are declared.

Unemployment benefit is more complicated.

Someone who takes a regular job one day a week, any day including Sundays, would lose entitlement to unemployment benefit. (Depending on how much they earn they will be entitled to claim supplementary benefit.)

Someone who works sporadically on one day a week between Monday and Saturday loses that day's entitlement to unemployment benefit, but does not lose entitlement to unemployment benefit itself.

Someone who has a sporadic Sunday job does not lose a day's unemployment benefit.

People in the last category are the problem.

Primary legislation would be needed to change the rules and the DHSS say their computers would be thrown into chaos.

E. R.

DHSS do not think the problem is or will be large, but they intend to keep it under review.

Lady Trumpington will be speaking about this in the Lords on Monday.

DRS

David Norgrove
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