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Older laid-off employees qualify for benefits

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Older workers who lost their jobs in 20 major layoffs across Quebec will share \$8.7 million in benefits under a little-known income program.

The federal and Quebec governments said yesterday that 168 people, half of them in the Montreal area, belong to the latest group to qualify under the Program for Older Worker Adjustment (POWA).

The eligible workers, who were over 55 when they were laid off and who have poor job prospects, will receive assistance until they turn 65.

Monthly benefits equal 70 per cent of the unemployment insurance payable to each person at the time of layoff and payments are adjusted for inflation.

For 1992, benefits will range between \$754 and \$1,292 per month. Recipients must have been in the labor market for 15 of the last 20 years and have been involved in major permanent layoffs.

Since the program was launched in 1989, a total of 3,235 laid-off workers have qualified across the country, including 1,905 in Quebec, a federal official said. Ottawa assumes 70 per cent of the costs and the provinces the rest.

The latest list of layoffs covered by the program included seven by companies on Montreal Island, involving 69 older workers.

They were Black & Decker Canada (Montreal), **Bonimart (Mount Royal)**, Chaussures White Cross (1989) and Chaussures R&R World Wide (St. Leonard), Emaillieurs Laurentide (Montreal East), Polyvalent (Dorval) and Slater Steel (Lachine).

Other designated layoffs in the Montreal region affected 19 older workers. They were Commonwealth Plywood (Belleterre), Meubles Croydon (St. Jean) and Imperial Converters (St. Jerome).

For more information call Labor Canada at (800) 567-1916 or the Quebec Manpower Ministry at (800) 363-3288.

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