benefit year, the Executive Director is authorized to exempt the employees who thereby become unemployed from producing evidence required under this section of the law, if it is found by the Executive Director that the circumstances and labor market conditions justify such exemptions; however, such employees must comply with the provisions of subsection (a) of this section and must be able to work and otherwise available for work. Exemption may be granted only with regard to a specific plant shutdown, and shall not be construed to exempt any claimant from meeting the requirements of this article that he is able to work and otherwise fully available for work.

Provided further that notwithstanding any other provisions of this subsection, no otherwise eligible individual shall be denied benefits for any week because he is in training with the approval of the Executive Director, nor shall such individual be denied benefits with respect to any week in which he is in training with the approval of the Executive Director by reason of the application of the provisions in this subsection relating to availability for work and active search for work or the provisions of § 6(d) of this article relating to failure to apply for, or refusal to accept suitable work.

8.

(c) (1) For taxable periods beginning on and after January 1, 1972, each employer who has not been subject to this article for a sufficient period of time to have his rate computed under the provisions hereof shall pay contributions at a rate not exceeding [2.7] 2.8 percent, that is the higher of (a) 1.0 percent, [or] (b) the State's five-year benefit cost rate, OR (C) THE CONTRIBUTION RATE WHICH, PURSUANT TO PARAGRAPH (4), APPLIES TO EMPLOYERS WITH A BENEFIT RATIO OF .0000. For purposes of this paragraph, the State's five-year benefit cost rate shall be computed annually and shall be derived by dividing the total dollar amount of regular benefits and one half of any extended benefits paid to claimants under this article during the five consecutive calendar years immediately preceding the computation date by the total dollar amount of wages subject to contributions under this article during the same period.

(3) (i) If an employer's experience-rating record has been chargeable with benefits during the 3 calendar years immediately preceding the computation date (as defined in paragraph (9) of this subsection) and each of his annual payrolls, as defined herein, during the three calendar years equals or exceeds $200, the employer shall be assigned an earned rate based upon his experience as provided in this paragraph. However, any employer who has not been subject to the provisions of this article for a period of time sufficient to meet the 3 calendar year requirement shall for each fiscal year have his rate computed on the basis of his experience if his account has been chargeable with benefits throughout at least the