

Supply

would be nice if it did. Our Party will not delay Bill C-34 because it does not deal adequately with this issue, but Canadians have the right to know the inadequacy of that Bill. That is why normal debate should take place.

We cannot make the point often enough that even though we have high unemployment, 40 per cent of Canadian firms report difficulty locating workers with necessary skills. That is hard to believe. A lack of foresight and planning and proper labour legislation has brought about this situation.

Has the Government notified Canadians of technological change? Has it prepared for the over 30 per cent of Canadians who are considered functionally illiterate? There are sources that have done studies such as the one entitled, "Global Stakes, the future of high-tech in America". It lists the number of professionals per ten thousand people. In North America there are 40 trained accountants, in Japan there are three. There are 20 lawyers in North America compared to one in Japan. However, there are 25 engineers in North America and 35 in Japan. They do not have low unemployment and are not meeting technological change because they do not know what they are doing. They know what they are doing. They are training and giving the guidance that is required of government.

Government training and educational programs in this country are totally inadequate. Because of its inadequacy, the Government has been forced into programs that do not necessarily apply to the problems. This has resulted in a band-aid and make-shift situation that is costing billions of dollars and is not attacking the problem the way it should. Programs are consolidated and then splintered. All the while the problems continue to stare us in the face. The priorities are missed. Our apprenticeship programs in this country are far behind those of other countries. We have the lowest apprenticeship enrolment in the western world.

Co-operative education and literacy training receive the smallest financial support. Co-op education is one area that has a direct effect on solving the problems. There the technology is taught in direct relationship to the needs of business. Co-op education is working on the job part-time and attending classes for the remainder of the day.

I said before that 30 per cent of our population is functionally illiterate. With education as necessary as it now is, what does the Government do? It introduces Bill C-12, which has the net effect of reducing funding for post-secondary training. We in the Opposition have put forward amendments. We oppose the Bill in its present form. It should have more social direction and aim. We want money to go to the technological institutes and the training schools. What does the Government do? It ignores us.

Bill C-34 should address the problem of training, phasing our youth into the labour market without jeopardizing trade unions or the viability of business. Bill C-34 and our Labour Code should lead the way, setting the precedent for all other labour Bills.

In Canada we run and hide from technology. We are a trading nation. Over 30 per cent of our GNP is tied to foreign trade. Incredibly, 1968 we traded more than Japan. Today their trade is more than double ours. We must face up to technology and ensure that the transition is fair. The worker on the job must be given ample time for change. Why was the Labour Code not brought forward sooner? Does it contain those provisions? No. We must address the jobs of the future if we are going to have a productive society and a reduction of unemployment levels.

Before an election and just before the end of a session, we see a labour code. The Member on the Government side pointed out that some Bill had to be brought down before the end of a session. I agree. However, why such an important Bill? It is a basic right to have good, sound working conditions. Why jeopardize that by bringing in the Bill so close to the end?

Earlier this year the Hon. Member for Perth (Mr. Jarvis) said that something should be done about this. He asked where this legislation was. The Government has shirked its responsibility. It is using a labour situation as a political football to try to embarrass the Opposition and to blame someone else for its shortcomings. The Hon. Member for Kootenay West (Mr. Kristiansen) spoke about safety. He made it sound as though his Party were the only Party concerned about safety. He wanted us to believe that he is the only one who has ever worked in the trenches. A lot of people in the Official Opposition have worked in the trenches, and I am one of them.

Mr. Kristiansen: On your way through.

Mr. St. Germain: Not on our way through, not for one minute. My entire family have been involved in construction for all of their lives. I know what safety is. I have been head of a labour union whereas most of you guys in the NDP have never even had a job.

● (1640)

Mr. Kristiansen: Most of which guys?

Mr. St. Germain: You fellows in the NDP.

Mr. Kristiansen: That is a lie.

Mr. St. Germain: The Labour Code covers only 10 per cent of the workforce. But as there were 82,000 workers injured and 18 workers killed in 1981, as the Hon. Member for Fraser Valley West pointed out, this area deserves careful attention. Why so late? Again it is a political Bill and the NDP would like to make it a larger political football than it is already.

Mr. Kristiansen: We just want to pass it.

Mr. St. Germain: This is a legal precedent-setting piece of legislation. It is not worthy of this Government to wait so long to introduce it. The Government is slipping it in just before an election.

If you were a worker, Mr. Speaker, affected by the Labour Code and apprehensive about technology and displacement,