

Employment

result, we have brought in a number of special programs to deal with that.

Just before Christmas we brought in special programs dealing with work sharing and job sharing under the unemployment insurance program. Right now there are several hundred applications on our desk. We have already signed over ten work-sharing concepts which have saved hundreds of jobs in Canada by working out with the unions, private employers and the federal government a way of extending the work week of the workers of British Columbia, Manitoba, Ontario and the maritimes.

The hon. member for Rosedale says nothing is going on. I ask him to look at the work-sharing concept introduced before Christmas. It is being received with a great deal of acceptance by a number of governments and private employers. The hon. member cannot have it both ways. He cannot say we are not doing anything and totally ignore the initiative we took on work sharing and job creation under the unemployment insurance program.

We have applied in those communities that are hard hit a number of special job placement measures, mobility measures and training measures. The people of Canada know those programs. They are at our offices every day asking to be included in them. It is only the members of the opposition who do not seem to know they exist. If they would read their mail more frequently, they could provide better information to their constituents about what is available. Rather than coming to the House of Commons, raising false alarms, ringing the bell and saying there is fire everywhere, they would be doing a much better service to this country if they simply provided the information to the businessmen and labour unions in their constituency to ensure they know what is available.

At the same time we have introduced the ILAP program to help communities particularly hard-hit by giving them a range of assistance in industrial investment, labour adjustments, mobility grants and training assistance. Contrary to what the hon. member from Hamilton indicated in the press two weeks ago, in those four communities since last fall the figures show that we have helped over 17,000 workers to get training, new placements or direct jobs. In those four communities designated under the ILAP program, in that short period we have provided assistance to 17,000 workers. That is not a total absence of policy. It is an experimental initiative to target in on those communities particularly hard hit by industrial change, dislocation and lay-offs.

We have just added to those communities four additional communities, making a total of eight. In addition we have designated the industrial areas of appliances and auto parts for special assistance. Therefore, we are attempting to provide those basic supports for the workers and businesses in those communities and provide alternative employment and job-creation efforts.

I deny categorically the comments and statements made by the hon. member for Rosedale that nothing is being done. There is a basic, unreasoning flaw in his resolution to this House because it does not happen to be true. If the hon.

member had come forward and said we should be looking at other alternatives, presenting new ideas, different kinds of initiatives that we might examine, we in this House would have been more than willing to listen and accept.

We do not pretend we have all the answers. We do not pretend that there are magic solutions. We hope that all members on both sides of this House will put their creative minds to work to develop answers to the job situation, because it is serious. We must respond to it. The hon. member simply comes to this House with blanket condemnations, wholesale denunciation, great appeals to the empathy of people, saying we must do more. We want to do more.

There is a certain presumptuousness on the part of hon. members opposite. They say they are the only ones who care. That is absolute nonsense. Members on this side of the House, backbenchers and ministers, spend a lot of hours each day working on programs.

An hon. Member: Where are they?

Mr. Axworthy: We are working on programs that we are delivering to their communities. The hon. member for Brant (Mr. Blackburn) came to my office three weeks ago asking that Brantford receive an ILAP designation, which it did. That Member of Parliament was doing his job, not like some of the big mouths in that corner who simply cry, howl and yell with all kinds of rhetorical alarms. The NDP member for Brant did his job as a Member of Parliament. He said there were problems in his community and he wanted some assistance. As a result of the representations he made, as well as those made by members of that community, the municipal council and the member of the legislature for that area, we were able to designate Brantford for special treatment. That is the kind of effort we must make and we must provide far more co-operation.

• (1600)

When the hon. member for Rosedale talks about confrontation in training programs, I would say that he is simply reading his own press releases. He is not looking at what in fact happened. The fact of the matter is that we consider the provision of a new training program essential to the economic growth of Canada to improve the productivity of workers.

The fact of the matter is that the government spends close to \$900 million to train Canadians. Unfortunately, large amounts of that money are spent on training people for jobs which no longer exist, jobs for surplus occupations. Consequently, we thought it absolutely essential that we begin to change our training programs.

The hon. member talks about confrontation, and I would like to tell him how much confrontation there was. First, we put out a report for public consultation, consulted with the provincial governments last fall, then we had discussions with close to 200 organizations across Canada. We then had a federal-provincial meeting which resulted in an agreement.