

we respect and should encourage the pressure that should always be placed upon government to seek every avenue to try to provide opportunities for young people.

The young people tell us that we must concentrate on the development of skills and human resources for all segments of the youth population. We must generate meaningful activities in the areas of education, training and voluntary services for all those with depressed employment prospects. We must promote a sense of excellence and innovation and encourage young people to identify with these goals of society so that their considerable talents will improve. The public should not be misled that we can do this overnight.

This Government has already taken huge steps to respond to these concerns. Through our Youth Opportunity Fund, we will invest more than \$1.3 billion in this fiscal year alone in training, job creation and employment services for young people. That is a significant amount of money.

The Youth Opportunity Fund is a comprehensive and overall global approach to a very complex problem. Through this fund, programs and services are made available for all youth groups, including the early high school leaver who has little or no educational skill that would provide him with a job in the workforce at the present time, students searching for summer work experience and all other young people looking for an entry into the world of work.

Today I would like to focus my remarks, which of course are limited by time, on the national training program and how the Government, through that program, is helping young people develop the skills that will enable them to be truly productive members of Canada's workforce. When the National Training Act was proclaimed in 1982, it allowed us to bring our training system up to date and to prepare Canadians for full participation in this technological era. With it, we have been able to develop policies and programs that compare favourably with those of other countries. The program is designed to help those who need to update their present skills, learn new ones or to be in a better position to find permanent employment.

The national training program is working at its full capacity to give Canadians the skills that they will need to find rewarding jobs. In point of fact, the Government has in place an enlightened program and policy that provides for the training and retraining needs of all its human resources. This Government is at the forefront of activity to develop the talents of all Canadians, but extends a helping hand to those who need it the most. While there is concern for all, undeniably, young people—especially those with little education and skills and those whose education has not prepared them for the realities of the workplace—are prime beneficiaries.

Perhaps at this point I should mention the extent of our financial assistance for training. This fiscal year we will be spending more than a billion dollars to help Canadians upgrade their present skills or to learn new ones. More than half of the total training budget is directed toward the purpose of courses in both public and private learning institutions for individual Canadians. This will provide training opportunities

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for some 220,000 men and women, nearly half of whom will be young people.

Besides this institutional training, we have in place the industrial training component, projected to train some 61,000 Canadians during this fiscal year. More than 26,000 of them will be young people. Industrial training is highly important as it involves the co-operation and partnership of the private sector where trainees learn a trade under general industrial training or a skill of national importance under the critical skills training stream. The Hon. Member for Kitchener (Mr. Lang) alluded to that program and its importance a few moments ago.

This emphasis on training and retraining in high skill occupations is in fact in effect. It is an important aspect of the national training program. As a result, there has been a sharp increase in the number of trainees in occupations of national importance. In fact, in terms of trainee starts, the number has nearly doubled in less than two years. Occupations are designated as being of national importance when they have traditionally been in short supply or foreseen as being needed in tomorrow's high technology world for which appropriate training action can be taken to prevent or alleviate the shortage.

Another way in which the Government is helping to meet the challenge of change quickly is through what is known as the Skills Growth Fund. This fund, which was established through the National Training Act, assists public institutions as well as non-profit organizations to establish, expand or modernize training facilities. Since this Skill Growth Fund got under way less than two years ago, a total of 247 projects have been approved with a value of more than \$165 million. Every province and territory has had projects approved. Both the public and private sectors have benefited. The figures show that public institutions such as community colleges have had 205 projects approved and a total funding of \$148 million.

Just two weeks ago, the Government added another \$30 million to the Skills Growth Fund for 1984-85. This money, coming as it does from the Youth Opportunity Fund, has been specifically designated to improve training opportunities and facilities for young people. Surely Hon. Members will agree that this is evidence of the Government's concrete action to help young people.

Let me cite a few examples to show how the Skills Growth Fund works to improve training opportunities. A youth job corps program in Toronto is using its \$261,000 allocation for employment preparation. The Nova Scotia Nautical Institute in Port Hawkesbury is using its \$3.2 million contribution to provide much needed maritime training to more than 300 trainees annually. The Youth Business Learning and Development Centre in Winnipeg has received \$107,000 to provide training and clerical assistance to people with special needs. The focus of this project is clerical upgrading, including word processing. The training is computer-based and this innovative approach has already shown to be effective with the project's young clientele. On the West Coast, at the British Columbia Institute of Technology, the Skills Growth Fund has made