

*Training and Development Program*

Conference in Regina puts greater emphasis on the consultation process and the combination of initiatives, training and job creation.

Very stiff competition on the international level and technological innovation are now altering the economic situation faced by Canadian workers.

Over the next decades, developments of that sort will have their impact on the relative significance of various industrial sectors and will be affecting skill requirements in the Canadian work force. This is the background referred to by my colleague.

It is also true, Mr. Speaker, that technological change obviously cannot help Canada if our labour force does not have the training required to make use of it.

Furthermore, a well-trained and highly educated population would have the best opportunities to develop other innovations, which in turn will generate economic growth over the coming years.

[English]

It is absolutely correct that consultation is important. It must be clear to all of my colleagues in the House that the Government has undertaken the largest consultation of any Government in recent history. It must be clear that the Minister has gone to meet with officials in every province to discuss the entire matter of employment. It is also clear that there has been consultation with educators. The Minister of Labour (Mr. McKnight) held a meeting with the Canadian Teachers' Federation to discuss possibilities in terms of education. As well, it is on record that six or seven of the Ministers have had individual meetings with officials of the Department of Labour. This Government and its officers have nothing to learn from past Governments and their officers about consultation.

As well, I would like to agree that this resolution is one to which it is difficult for anyone to object. I think everyone would agree that it is necessary to consider the advisability of consulting with the provinces. However, I wish the framer of the resolution had placed it in a somewhat broader context. Training and the improvement of training programs is only one part of a massive undertaking of the Government. There are also broad economic considerations at which we must look regarding the matter of employment for young Canadians.

It is true that training for high technology is a crucial aspect of this resolution. It is true that that is important for all Canadians and especially for the young. However, in terms of broad economic considerations, it is not only a matter of training young people that is important but it is essential that there be jobs for those young people. There cannot be jobs when we do not attract capital investment. There cannot be jobs when we have a national energy policy that chases capital away. There cannot be jobs when we have a Foreign Investment Review Agency that chases potential business away. It is important to keep interest rates low. It is important to increase productivity. Those are lessons which we need not learn from

the past. When my colleague spoke about the record of the Liberal Government, he should have mentioned those things. They are the reasons we have unemployment.

● (1740)

Having said that, I think the intent of the resolution is sound. Young Canadians must be ready for the future, and anything which we can do to help them is very important.

Our Government has done a lot more than just consider the advisability of consultation—it has acted. Anyone who has sat in the House during the last six months will know that the Government has announced the Challenge '85 program. That program will help young people in receiving appropriate training and in getting work during the summer in order that they can have the income to continue their university education. The Government has taken positive steps and initiated an ongoing consultation process with the provinces, educators, private sector employers and labour sector representatives. This Government has undertaken far more consultation in six months that did the previous Government in its entire mandate.

Co-operation from all sectors has resulted from the understanding that not only training but retraining must become a lifelong commitment for the labour force. It is true that the society of tomorrow will be very different from the industrial age in which most of us grew up. Inevitably, that makes the task of preparing for the information age important and critical. Nothing is more important than the way in which it will affect young Canadians.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I would like to tell the Hon. Member who spoke earlier about communicating a certain sense of urgency to the Canadian public, that, after being until last September principal of a secondary school, I can assure him that this sense of urgency is already in the minds of the Canadian people. In my own school division in the West, a number of computer awareness programs have already been initiated. From the pre-school level to Grade XII in primary and secondary schools, there are already in Canada a number of programs to make students aware of the situation described by the Hon. Member.

[English]

It is clear that nothing is more important than the way in which this program will affect young Canadians. Young Canadians already understand the importance of the technological society. They live with it daily. I would not agree with my colleague that we need to remind them about the sense of urgency. Young Canadians need only get up in the morning and see the sophisticated gadgetry in their homes to understand that technology is already with them. Not only do they understand that technology is already here, but we only have to look at any school in Canada to recognize that it is the adults who are more often afraid of technology than the young.