

National Training Act

that we are tied into the United States' market, but if the government had some concrete plans perhaps we could solve the problems that the country faces.

I will give a specific example of the problems we face when dealing with the government, Mr. Speaker. Last April the Minister of Employment and Immigration, the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce (Mr. Gray) the hon. member for Dauphin (Mr. Lewycky) and I met with the provincial minister of northern affairs to discuss the Northlands agreement. It is just a small part of the economic strategy of the government but in the last five years it provided \$155 million for the northern part of the Province of Manitoba, most of which I represent. That is not a large part of the Canadian budget, Mr. Speaker. There is a shared agreement, 60 per cent to come from the federal government and 40 per cent to come from the province. The agreement is significant to the people of northern Manitoba however, particularly the native people. We were told there would be a follow-up meeting with the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and the provincial minister of northern affairs and that an attempt would be made to solve the Northlands agreement. We were told by the federal minister that that meeting would occur in the last week of April or the first week in May. Here we are at the end of the second week in June and the meeting has not taken place yet, we have been told by the provincial minister that he is available at all times. As I said earlier, \$155 million may not be a large amount in the Canadian budget, but if we really believed we are going to help develop those parts of Canada which are underprivileged and provide training for those who need it, then the Canadian government would have that meeting. The minister was at the previous meeting where the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce promised this meeting. If this government were serious, that meeting would have taken place and this training program would provide the specifics to ensure that we do not have to import another 30,000 people three or four years down the road.

• (2030)

Two years ago I spoke with a master mechanic in the Manitoba forest industry in The Pas. He had been trained in Sweden, came over to Canada as a foreman, and he looked around and said there is not one person in this province that is trained to work on these machines. He talked about the intricacies of his own training in a program within what we would call a community college, and a training program in the industry he went to. He talked about all of that and said there are just no Canadians available. So part of the 30,000 people who must be brought to Canada are filling the need that this man was speaking about. I do not believe this program will meet that need, a very small one but very representative of the problems that we as Canadians face. I spent many years as a teacher and guidance counsellor for high school students. It was very upsetting to me to say that there are no programs in Canada. Certainly you can go to Red River Community College in Manitoba, or Keewatin or Assiniboine and take a program, but it is a very limited program and you will have trouble getting in because there are not enough places available to meet the needs of students in Manitoba.

Yet when I go to Winnipeg and talk with the professors, lecturers and instructors they say all of their graduates can get work. So what we are saying is, let's work together to develop these programs. Let us not have the minister make an announcement and then go to a meeting with the responsible provincial ministers. Let us have programs where the provinces and the federal government work together to meet the needs of Canadians. Let us have programs which will give our young people some hope for their future and one which will give Canadians hopes for our collective future.

Mr. Howard Crosby (Halifax West): Mr. Speaker, let me begin my remarks by indicating that I am in basic agreement with the intent of Bill C-115 as expressed in clause 3 which is:

—to establish a national program to provide occupational training for the labour force—

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, few could argue with that kind of purpose, and I know previous speakers for the Progressive Conservative Party have indicated their concurrence with that basic purpose of the bill. But at the same time we would be remiss in our duties to the Canadian public and our constituents and the people who must be served by this kind of legislation if we did not point out, in very dramatic and graphic terms, the drawbacks contained in this legislation which will cause problems perhaps for generations in the future. We know that once legislation of this kind is enacted it has a tendency to stay on the statute books for decade after decade without substantial change. We fear that possibility. So I rise to bring home again the features of this bill which ought to be underlined because they will create difficulties in the future.

The basic mistake in this bill, Mr. Speaker, is that it neglects the principle of co-operative federalism on which this country was built and on which most of our institutions rely. We have in Canada an educational system which has been developed as a mosaic over a long period of time. It consists of grade schools operated by municipalities, high schools operated by school boards across the country, and post-secondary education supported by private institutions, in many cases with the assistance of government. What the Government of Canada proposes to do in this legislation is to embark on its own course of action; one which is not based on the mosaic of our educational system and which is not the product of consultation with the provincial authorities who are charged with the management of that system in their provinces. This is not the first time the government has backed away from the principle of co-operative federalism; it culminated in a statement by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) not too long ago that co-operative federalism was dead. By bringing forward a bill purporting to establish a national program to provide for occupational training, the government has again confirmed that statement by the Prime Minister.

What price will we pay for killing co-operative federalism? We will destroy many of the educational institutions we have built up over a long period of time. The promoters of this bill, including the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr.