

*Adult Occupational Training Act*

money to training on the job or in industry as the case may be.

For comparison purposes, Mr. Speaker, and referring to the cost of relocating people who have been trained or those who are making application for job opportunities, I would point out that in 1965-66 the national employment service placed 960,995 people in jobs at a cost of \$22.95 per placement. In 1970-71, Manpower placed only 722,832 people in jobs at a cost of \$232.70 per placement. This did not include the money spent on manpower training. This is exactly what I am getting at, Mr. Speaker. I am pleased that the minister has included on-the-job training in the legislation, but the contrast between what was spent in 1965-66 and what is spent now per job placement illustrates the increase in spending in an effort to cope with the problem. I heartily agree with the minister when he says that he is pleased to see this point covered in his bill, and it is one area that we in this party support since it will bring about a saving to the Canadian taxpayer.

What one is questioning really is whether the best value is being received for the tax dollar or whether we are just keeping people off the labour force survey by putting them into some kind of occupation training or upgrading course. I am sure many members realize that this has happened because some people are not interested in training to upgrade themselves but just want to have something to do at a certain time of the year.

The previous speaker mentioned the 52 week maximum period. I am sure all of us know cases where trainees have not completed their courses because the final term of the course could not be completed within the 52 week period. I was pleased to learn that the former minister, as stated in a letter to me dated January 20, 1972, was willing to vary this requirement. The last paragraph of that letter reads:

I have advised officials of the manpower division that I am prepared to authorize extensions of training for individuals who have been ill during their training period or who have been unable to achieve normal progress in their training program. These extensions would only be authorized following consultation between the Canada Manpower Centre and the training authorities.

There are some, however, Mr. Speaker, who are still unable to complete the course and there is no use denying that the amount of money spent on them has gone forever, as are the benefits they could have provided to society. In this area, I believe the minister could give more discretionary power to the local manpower officials. They are on the spot and know whether a particular applicant really wishes to pass the course or is just trying to pass the time. This aspect has bothered many people across the country, including some who have tried to complete their training within the 52 week period which is provided in the present act and which remains in the act.

I have a few comments on the amendments before us, Mr. Speaker, and no doubt we will get into some of these matters in depth when the amendments reach committee. Section 4(1) of the present act provides:

Where an adult who has not attended school on a regular basis for at least 12 months informs a manpower officer—

Section 4(1) of Bill C-195 reads:

Where an adult who, at any time since attaining the regular leaving age in the province in which he resides has not attended

[Mr. Skoberg.]

school on a regular basis for any period of at least 12 months informs a manpower officer—

It seems strange indeed that the stipulation "any period" should be included with that 12 month period. That makes me wonder if we are not trying to hit something with a baseball bat that does not exist, at least as far as abuses are concerned. Perhaps we can go into this in committee.

• (1430)

May I congratulate the minister and the department for making changes in another area about which we were concerned. The waiting period has now been redefined and is to be one year instead of three years. We are glad, because we were concerned about the matter. The hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom) asked the minister earlier if wives of farmers are to be included in those eligible for training, and the minister replied that this will be considered in committee. What bothers me consistently about programs such as the one we are considering is this: much depends on the regulations and, invariably, when considering certain legislation or amendments, as we are now doing, we are asked to pass that legislation without knowing exactly what the regulations are to be. Actually, we do not know very much about the regulations until we see them. Therefore, we are being asked to pass legislation, the effect of which we do not really know. The minister and the Department of Manpower and Immigration are obligated to explain fully just who will be included and who will be excluded from the provisions of this bill. That can be done in committee.

We remember what happened in connection with unemployment insurance. We raised questions concerning severance pay and holiday pay, and are still waiting for answers. We are considering a most important amendment, and do not know exactly what the regulations will provide. Because we do not know what the regulations will provide, we could be subjected to a barrage of questions and criticism for passing a bill in good faith after debate in this House. I suggest, therefore, that we will need to examine closely the amendments which will be introduced in committee.

The minister should realize, I think, that on-the-job and in-plant training could be more valuable for certain employees than vocational training made available in institutions. In this regard the employers of this country have an obligation to fulfil, just as have the employees who take part in training programs. We must also make sure that people are placed in jobs for which they have been trained, so that they may use the practical knowledge they have acquired. Everyone knows that industry in this country is becoming highly automated and that technological changes are being introduced. We must make certain that changes in training programs will be in keeping with changes in industry. New skills cannot always, in my opinion, be taught at vocational training schools. Some can be better acquired through on-the-job training. Employees right in the plant can find out what methods are used. By so doing they can continue to serve the employer with whom they have trained and, if they meet the necessary requirements, serve him better.