

## PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

SUBJECT MATTER OF QUESTIONS TO BE DEBATED

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier):** It is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 40, to inform the House that the questions to be raised tonight at the time of adjournment are as follows: The hon. member for Provencher (Mr. Epp)—Labour Conditions—Increase in youth unemployment. (b) Role of government; the hon. member for Calgary West (Mr. Hawkes)—Energy—Service station cost of gasoline. (b) Request that price be reduced; the hon. member for Burnaby (Mr. Robinson)—The Judiciary—Canadian Judicial Council report on actions of British Columbia judge—government position. (b) Request for referral of subject to parliamentary committee.

## GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

### NATIONAL TRAINING ACT

MEASURE TO ESTABLISH

The House resumed consideration of the motion of Mr. Axworthy that Bill C-115, to establish a national program for occupational training, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Labour, Manpower and Immigration.

**Mr. Ray Skelly (Comox-Powell River):** Mr. Speaker, this legislation is extremely important, and although many members have criticized its shortcomings, the feeling exists that this kind of direction is necessary. Certainly there are concerns, and we have heard the case made time and again this afternoon that this bill is only as good as the industrial strategy which underpins the Canadian economy. The point has been made time and time again that if you do not have jobs, there is little point in retraining people.

It has also been said that the data to be used in making decisions are based on material from an outdated 1971 census. The dislocation and other problems which could result I think are fairly well known.

Another of the bill's shortcomings is that it does not provide enough detail. There is certainly concern about how to encourage employers—insist, if necessary—to take some of the responsibility for training. We have seen situations where a great many industries will pirate from other regions of the country, or push for immigration, rather than offer retraining. Basically there are no provisions in here which outline how employers will exercise their responsibility to make the retraining program a success.

This House has sat for many months. I guess this is the longest session in history. If you were to ask anyone his impression of the Thirty-second Parliament, I suspect it would

### *National Training Act*

only be described as a rudderless ship in which a majority Liberal government has run the Canadian economy on to the rocks. Then, once on the rocks, it generally lets many sectors of the economy literally bash themselves to pieces. There is an absolute lack of sound economic policy which causes enormous problems in the area of training programs. Basically there are no jobs for young people.

• (1720)

I had a rather sobering experience with a number of my colleagues in a local Ottawa high school. The graduating students of that school asked what we thought were their opportunities for employment. Quite frankly, I was somewhat embarrassed to be faced with such a forthright question. Actually we reflected it back to them by asking what they thought were their opportunities for employment given the present economic climate. Basically the students said nothing, because they knew their chances were slim if not non-existent. Even with training their chances for employment are slim or non-existent.

In the present economic climate we find that unemployment is the real problem, not job training. The bill before the House today should be one dealing with the area of job creation. The House should be given an opportunity to consider mechanisms by which interest rates would be reduced, at least for specific sectors of the economy, to get employment rolling and for training to become meaningful. Certainly the inflation rate is an acknowledged problem. Those are the priorities, not job training.

The job-training problem could be dealt with by existing legislation, but if we could create employment, without a doubt efficient management of the employment and immigration operation could provide the trained people. We require full cooperation by employers in a functioning economy to provide trained people, but this is not what we have before us today. We do not find mechanisms to create meaningful jobs.

The rudderless ship which produced the bill before us today is faced with many problems. For example, the small business bankruptcy rate is enormous. I think the figures which came out last week are worth repeating. Bankruptcies were up roughly 49 per cent. In May there were 751 bankruptcies with total assets lost of \$162 million. For approximately five months there were 4,429 bankruptcies for a total increase this year of 36 per cent, or a total loss of \$817 million. Of course, the bankruptcies are only the tip of the iceberg. Many more businesses are closing their doors, are disappearing, and are being taken over by receivers. If we multiply the number of bankruptcies by two or three jobs, we realize that there are shrinking opportunities for trained people to find employment.

What is the point of training people if there is no meaningful employment? We should not repeat the former situation under the old legislation where training programs became an