

high technology product development and enhancing the training of our labour force.

The extent to which technology can be harnessed depends upon the skills of the people who direct, maintain and operate it. In this context, the development of a skilled work force will be a determining factor in our future prosperity.

A recent report of the Economic Council of Canada shows that 85 per cent of all companies surveyed expect to be using computer-based technology by 1990. That is only a year or so away. It also points out that those companies that adopt new technology are generally companies that are growing faster and becoming more efficient than their competitors. The result is clear. We have a responsibility to direct our resources into education and training so that we will have skilled people to make industry competitive. We are talking here about a shared responsibility involving the federal Government and the private sector; in fact, a shared responsibility that involves all Canadians.

The labour force development strategy is designed to put into practice these objectives, to rechannel our resources into improving the amount and quality of skills training. It is also encouraging industry to take a leadership role in training as their counterparts have done in Japan, the United States and other leading economic powers around the world. In addition to increased training for employed Canadians, we will also under this strategy use the unemployment insurance program for more constructive ends. Greater emphasis will be placed on actively developing workers rather than providing passive income support. What we are saying is that instead of giving them a cheque when they become unemployed, we will train them and give them a skill that will allow them to go into the market-place and maintain an active job.

Today in Canada we spend almost \$12 billion on unemployment insurance and only \$1.8 billion on employment programs designed to get people back to work. It is evident that if we want to prepare people for jobs in the 1990s, we must help them become equipped with the skills that the 1990s will require.

Bill C-21 therefore provides a major expansion of active employment programming within the unemploy-

Unemployment Insurance Act

ment insurance program. It commits the vital resources unemployed workers need to get back to work in productive long-term jobs. The current budget for development uses in the UI program is just over \$400 million per year. The measures contained in Bill C-21 will see this grow by over three times to an expected full implementation budget of over \$1.4 billion, not the cut-backs that the Members on the other side are talking about.

We are convinced that Canadians want to work. They want to be part of a productive and contributing force in the community. That is why we are proposing that UI claimants who have viable business plans in hand be able to capitalize on those benefits to help defray business start-up costs. We have many people working in a business for a number of years who have a desire to get out on their own. Perhaps the business environment has changed for them. Perhaps they have other interests and we are looking forward to interviewing those people to see if we can help them get into their own businesses.

The beneficiaries of such a plan go beyond the enterprising worker to include the entire community. Instead of workers sitting at home, or—let us admit it—participating in an underground economy, they will now breathe the same air as someone with a legitimate product or service to offer. We are also proposing that claimants be able to receive some portion of their UI payments in a lump sum as may be necessary to help finance their move if they wish to relocate to an area where job prospects are more plentiful.

We are not forgetting the displaced and older worker who is sidelined by a plant closure or a setback in the local economy but whose talents and experience this country cannot afford to lay aside. We propose a substantial increase in funding for educational upgrading, retraining and job-finding resources to help the older workers regain their place in the market-place. This is a fact of life in some of the more industrial areas of Canada where older workers on occasion find themselves taking early retirement. They then find early retirement rather boring and decide they would like to re-enter the labour force but find that their skills should be upgraded so they can take advantage of the new machinery and technologies being used today in industry.