

*Business of Supply*

lack of commitment on the part of the government in connection with an extremely important national problem. Third, we have done so because it is important to force the government through one of its ministers to make a statement of its policies and plans to develop and maintain manpower resources, especially student manpower resources, in Canada.

As I said in connection with a previous opposition motion this session, if we can succeed only in shaking the government out of its lethargy this allotted day will have been very well spent. Perhaps we may bring home to the public the urgency of the problem and in turn create sufficient pressure on the government so that a real manpower policy will attain the priority it ought to have in Canada.

● (3:30 p.m.)

In a country with Canada's population, at our stage of economic growth and in our competitive position, there is nothing more basic than the development and retention of manpower resources. This is the key to economic progress and to creative excellence, as well as the availability of the highest standard of professional services of all kinds.

The so-called brain drain is, of course, an old problem, but its present dimensions reflect the failure of this country to achieve potential growth—economic, technological and scientific. At the same time it deprives us of people who it must be assumed would have made a significant contribution to our growth and development. To the United States alone we have lost more than 214,000 Canadians in the past five years, and this despite certain job restrictions imposed by the United States government in 1965 and despite the selective service and draft laws of the United States. On the other hand, I am the first to recognize that there is a brain gain on the other side of the coin and that Canada is one of the chief beneficiaries. I could cite the percentages of doctors, engineers, architects and so on in Canada today who came here from other countries. The percentages are strikingly high in some cases, and I invite hon. members to look them up in Economic Council reports and other sources.

We in Canada have relied to some extent upon immigration for professional people, but there is nobody in this house, I trust, who would suggest for a moment that Canada can afford to lose young people in the numbers that have been emigrating from this country. Neither would anybody suggest, for example,

that it is acceptable that some 30 per cent of our Ph.D.'s trained here leave for the United States. Indeed, the government itself has adopted the initiative undertaken privately several years ago by the Association of Universities and Colleges and is pursuing what is called "Operation Retrieval", designed to try to retrieve as many as possible of the 15,000 Canadians now studying abroad. Nobody will deny that this is a noble cause, but where are the careers in our own country for these people? In a month or so the government will be standing by watching how many of this year's graduating classes leave the country.

I should like to know whether the government has any idea how many have left. Have any studies been made of how many of this year's graduating classes are likely to be absorbed in Canada? If so, what policy conclusions have been drawn as a result of such studies? What are the projections for the next three to five years? Is there anyone in the government who knows or even cares?

I need not quote any authorities on the relationship between education and the development of our country; that vital connection is accepted by every member of this house. Surely the house is entitled to hear from the government what approach it is taking and how seriously and urgently it regards the problem facing us in the spring of 1969 and indeed in subsequent years.

I understand that some 88,000 students will be graduating from colleges and universities within the next month or so. On one campus after another in this country the story seems to be the same—fewer companies, fewer governments and fewer government agencies recruiting fewer people than last year. I am not going to go into the details; the situation seems to be clear. At Memorial university in St. John's there is a 10 per cent decrease in the number of companies recruiting their labour requirements; there are 15 per cent fewer at McMaster. And so it goes. There are fewer jobs available this year than last, with more students looking for them.

The size of the 1969 graduating class is apparently 20 per cent larger than last year—88,000 compared with 59,000. The number of post-graduate degrees being granted this year is increasing at an even faster rate than undergraduate degrees—7,800 last year compared with 6,500 the year before. These figures are continuing to increase from year to year. The magnitude of our losses will, therefore, increase from year to year unless some action is taken.