

*Manpower and Immigration Council*

I could suggest a few myself. But I think it would be the height of folly to cut down on programs that are designed to increase productivity and the employability of Canadian workers.

I hesitate to get into the dismal science of economics and the painful subject of inflation, but I understand that a major cause of inflation is excess on the demand side of the economy as against the supply side. The direct cutting down of expenditures can of course reduce demand. But if the cuts are directed at programs like manpower, then productivity and economic growth are diminished and all you have done is keep the inflationary pressure just about where it was before, but at a lower level of production and employment. I hope the minister can assure us that if economies are necessary they will not be carried out at the expense of training programs designed to increase the productivity of Canadian workers and upgrade their skills so they can produce more. It would be a very foolish policy if it were so.

I now wish to refer to a particular branch of this program as it affects a particular group of people. In so far as there are reductions in these training programs, and in so far as they especially affect immigrants, this would be doubly disastrous. It would be disastrous for the immigrants themselves and disastrous for Canada. The government's white paper on immigration throughout bases government immigration policy on the contribution that trained and skilled immigrants can make to an economy of growth. The white paper first of all assigns responsibility in this respect. It says on page 39:

Thereafter—

That is after the immigrants have come to this country.

—the manpower division will assume responsibility for the counselling and placement of workers and such family counselling as may be needed in addition.

I commend this white paper to the minister. I know he produced it himself, or his advisers did. It was produced with some fanfare, as I recall it. The white paper goes on to say in paragraph 103:

People who come to Canada should receive the kinds of services they need to start productive employment as soon as possible. They may need language training, short courses in Canadian techniques and standards in their occupational field, labour market information and counselling, and even internal mobility assistance. These are manpower services. Immigrants must be made aware of them and be put in touch with the manpower organization which can provide them. Conversely,

[Mr. Brewin.]

the manpower organization will be in the best position to assess labour shortages in industry and to advise immigration authorities about these. Thus there will be a close working relationship between manpower and immigration officials in assisting immigrants both before and after they arrive in Canada. Sufficient financial and personnel resources will be made available to ensure that no immigrant will lack any help he may want in getting established or fail to realize that such help is available.

I commend that passage of the white paper to the minister. It obviously makes sense that if you are bringing people to this country as immigrants, one of the main policy reasons for so doing is that they may add to the productive resources or pool of this country. It does not make any sense if they are not given fully adequate retraining facilities, as this paragraph of the white paper provides. If you are closing down training centres and making regulations that may make it difficult for immigrants to obtain retraining, you are in my view denying the very policy put forward in the white paper.

Manpower and immigration must work together. The minister heads both these departments. I do not think they can be working together very well if, as I hear from quite a number of my constituents, they were participating in these training programs, receiving on-the-job training and being supported during this period, as is necessary, but were then cut off from the programs. I ask the minister to again look into this question. I ask him whether Mr. Fenwick is wrong and whether the 80 teachers who have resigned are wrong. If the minister is right in saying that this has nothing to do with the government's austerity program and there really is no endeavour to cut down manpower training, but in fact the reverse, I hope he will make this crystal clear. There is obviously a lot of misunderstanding, even in circles which ought to be fairly well informed about this particular matter.

● (8:20 p.m.)

I do not wish to belabour these points and I do not desire to discuss at length the amendment which was proposed by the hon. member for Halifax (Mr. McCleave). It seems to me that it deserves support and I hope the minister will consider it. As I understand it, it proposes that an annual report be made to parliament by the manpower council which we are setting up. I cannot imagine what harm that would do. In fact I think it will do some good. The minister said once before that this council is merely an advisory body, not an executive one, and that it does not