

Changes in Manpower Mobility Program

either a grant or a loan if they were unemployed for a certain period; I believe it was four months. The minister said several changes were proposed, one of them being that the restrictive condition requiring that a man be unemployed for four months will be dropped altogether and that any person who becomes unemployed or has been notified of his permanent lay-off will be entitled to a grant or a loan.

I notice that the word "loan" has been dropped in favour of the word "grant". In other words there will be an outright debt free grant given to these people. However, the minister does not specify that such grants will only be extended to people in dire financial need. If that is not so, then an unconditional grant will be available to anyone who is unemployed or who has been given notice of his permanent lay-off, regardless of his financial position.

The second change is that a grant of \$500 will be given to people who have to sell a house and move to another area, thus incurring a financial loss. It seems to me that \$500 would not be sufficient where a worker in a small municipality owns a house where the value is in the range of \$5,000 or \$6,000 and has to move to another area where the only housing available to him is in the range of \$14,000. I think the minister should look at this aspect to ascertain whether some other plan could be put into effect which would be more helpful to people who have to move to areas where houses might be available but where this flat \$500 grant would not be sufficient.

● (12 noon)

Under the third proposal the minister said travel expenses would be paid to areas where there may be better opportunities, and the dependants of the person concerned will receive allowances based on \$20 for the first dependant, \$30 for two dependants and \$40 for three or more for a maximum of four weeks. I presume these payments will be made when a person is directed by the manpower service to a certain place and before that person has established a residence.

As I said at the beginning, these changes are welcome and I compliment the minister upon them. I hope they work to the benefit of those who find themselves without jobs. It is quite evident that more and more people are becoming unemployed, and of course this program becomes necessary for those who find themselves in that position. I should like the minister to take another look at the \$500

[Mr. Starr.]

grant to aid in the purchase of another home, to ascertain whether some other type of plan can be worked out.

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, we greet with approval the improvements in the manpower mobility program which the minister announced today. Having said that, however, I think it is necessary to point out to the minister and the government that over the past couple of years organizations such as the Canadian Labour Congress and its affiliated unions have been extremely critical of the inadequacies of the existing program as well as the projected programs. The announcements the minister makes today are welcome, but if we compare them with the need illustrated recently for facilities for the retraining of auto workers, the inadequacies are pointed up.

According to the minister, 5,700 auto workers are being laid off as a result of the auto pact, yet we do not have facilities for training more than a small percentage of these displaced workers. It is obvious, therefore, we have a long way to go before we could consider the manpower program of the government adequate. I join with the hon. member for Ontario in expressing concern over the \$500 grant announced by the minister because it will prove inadequate, as have most of the steps the government has taken to date. This grant will be of small help to a worker who may be laid off in Oshawa or in Cape Breton, where the coal industry is in trouble, if he has to move to a city like Toronto in which the cost of housing is high. The \$500 will be of little help in the purchase or rental of another house.

So, Mr. Speaker, while joining with the spokesman for the official opposition in welcoming these small changes, I suggest to the minister that he still has a long way to go before his department has established a policy which will meet the needs of Canadian workers who are being displaced at a rapid rate in this technological age.

Mr. H. A. Olson (Medicine Hat): Mr. Speaker, I certainly hope the minister has found some means of improving the mobility program. As I look over the statement he made today I find there are a number of weaknesses in it. I believe his statement that it will be difficult to administer this program is the understatement of the year. It would appear that the new program will make a great many people eligible for payments to cover some of the cost of moving, and with