

Manpower and Immigration Council

programs. As the dropouts and unemployed re-enter the labour force with their new abilities, they provide a quick return on the taxpayer's dollar.

While there is agreement on this principle at all levels of government thousands of workers are already suffering directly (and all Canadians will suffer indirectly) because of a demarcation dispute between Ottawa and the provinces.

With its new adult training program, the federal government has sought to create a wide buffer zone between school education—a provincial responsibility—and the retraining of genuine dropouts from the school system.

It goes on to point out the following:

To qualify for federal subsistence allowances (from \$35 to \$90 a week) during retraining, an applicant must either have dependents or have been working or seeking work for the past three years.

● (5:30 p.m.)

The article goes on to point out that these new requirements were based upon a desire to deal with the loophole which allowed some teenagers to quit school and return to classes a few days later and apply for retraining. The article continues:

Ontario government officials said that about 7,000 persons stood to lose the living allowances that they were receiving during training.

Then it goes on:

Many of these reluctant dropouts are immigrants who have been picking up the basic English and the technical skills that would make them productive members of the community. Without the allowances, many single persons simply cannot afford to support themselves while going to day school.

The federal government has a particular responsibility toward the immigrants to whom it is now denying retraining opportunities. Immigration is a federal prerogative and Mr. Marchand and his colleagues have a clear duty to help the people they have brought into Canada until they are in a position to look after themselves.

I repeat to the minister that if this policy is based upon some so-called constitutional rule or argument that the federal government does not have responsibility in this field, he should get some better constitutional advisers because there is no question in the world that it is a constitutional responsibility of the federal government to assist in the retraining of immigrants. Indeed, it runs totally contrary to the whole theory behind the immigration policy which the minister has eloquently advanced from time to time, namely, that immigration is an economic necessity and that to meet it we are seeking people with skills who can make contributions to this country.

It does not make any sense, when we should be seeking to retrain and teach English to immigrants in our big cities—I have

mentioned Toronto because I am more familiar with that city but it is only an example—if the courses are discontinued because this government does not accept responsibility in that particular field. I read one further paragraph from the editorial in the *Globe and Mail*:

In its second annual report, the Economic Council of Canada stated with great emphasis that a lack of skilled manpower was one of the major obstacles to be overcome in achieving a satisfactory rate of economic growth. Yet the new regulations have already succeeded in turning away thousands who are anxious to acquire new skills.

I plead with the minister to reconsider this matter because, as I said before, it not only affects the individuals who are denied the opportunity and are thereby perhaps thrown into unemployment and despair in the new country to which they have come but it represents a loss to our whole economy. It is in absolute contradiction to what I thought to be on the whole a very enlightened policy enunciated by the minister in regard to immigration to this country.

I do not believe for a moment that these sort of regulations would ever have been adopted had there been in existence strong advisory committees and a manpower council that could have told the minister ahead of time what would happen. I am sure it was not the minister's intention to destroy this excellent program but he has partially succeeded in doing so by reason of a lack of adequate advice. I believe this council will be very helpful in that regard.

I should now like to turn from the question of manpower to immigration generally. Many of us observed with very great interest the recently announced changes in the regulations, the points system, and so on. How these will work out will be seen in the course of time. I think this is a very genuine effort to give a more specific content to the rules for admission and as such it is to be commended and welcomed. But I say to the minister that this is only a small part of the problem. There is the whole question of the revision of the act itself. There is the whole question of how security procedures are denying us, contrary to the advice of many of the most loyal ethnic groups of this country, the ability to bring from the countries of eastern Europe skilled and loyal people who will make a real contribution to this country. That matter has not been dealt with.