

*Manpower and Immigration Council*

former government, which this government decided last year to get out of, we made certain proposals. Members of our party have suggested time and again that we believe there is nothing in the constitution which prevents the government of Canada in co-operation with the provinces from participating in a technical and vocational training program.

It was our belief at that time, and it is still our belief, that it was a disastrous mistake for the government of Canada to get out of this field. However, this government made that decision. The minister spoke very proudly when he stated that the government intended to assume not only 50 per cent but 100 per cent of the responsibility for manpower retraining. He said this was the government's job and that it would be fulfilled. Yesterday I asked how the government intended to fulfil that responsibility.

The minister said that education was the responsibility of the provinces, and I agree. I suggest to the minister, as I have on a number of occasions, that as long as immigration is the responsibility of the federal government and as long as this government follows an aggressive policy of encouraging people to come to Canada from countries in which the native language is not English or French, it is the responsibility of the government of Canada to encourage every single one of these individuals to learn to speak English or French, depending on the area in which they live. This is not the responsibility of the provincial governments, local boards of education, or local school boards. These immigrants should be encouraged to learn to speak English or French as quickly as possible. In this regard the federal government should put its money where its mouth is and indicate to the provinces and local boards of education and school boards that it is prepared to pay for such education.

I am sure the minister has the immigration figures at his fingertips. I do not have them with me but I am sure that this year there has been more immigration to Canada than in any other year since world war II. I note that the Registrar General (Mr. Turner) is as pleased with that situation as I am, but let me repeat that although more people have come to Canada from countries such as Italy, Greece, Portugal, Spain and Germany than ever before, the number of these people attending classes where they may learn to speak English or French has decreased. This is certainly indicated by the figures I received from the Toronto board of education for 1967,

[Mr. Orlikow.]

and the decrease has not occurred only during the summer months.

One of the explanations the minister has put forth for the decrease in the number of people attending retraining classes is that there is more employment. I suggest that is a very weak argument. Speaking from memory—I am sure I am not far out in my percentages—I would say that the number of unemployed in Canada this year compared with last year is down but the decrease in the percentage of unemployed is less than half of 1 per cent in comparison with last year. Surely the minister's explanation has no bearing on the number of immigrants who are attending retraining classes to learn English or French. In fact, in view of the number of immigrants to Canada last year there should be substantially more attending these classes, but the figures show the exact reverse of that situation.

Let me repeat the figures very quickly. In the city of Toronto as of January 31, 1967 there were 2,081 individuals attending the special English for new Canadians classes. In February of the same year the figure was 2,347. In March there were 2,290, in April, 2,271, in May, 2,067, in June, 1,701, in July, 1,479 and in August, 1,137. Although the number of immigrants has increased, these figures represent a decrease of almost 50 per cent.

● (4:20 p.m.)

The minister says we are talking about different months and that in the summer months the number attending goes down. I do not know whether the minister was not listening to me yesterday or his very competent assistants did not take the trouble after we rose to read *Hansard*. I will give the minister the figures for new applications in the city of Toronto from April to September, 1966 and 1967, month by month. Then he cannot say I am comparing apples with oranges; I am comparing the good employment months of this year with the bad employment months of last year.

Let us take these figures month by month and compare 1966 with 1967. In April of 1966 there were 830 applicants for retraining courses in the city of Toronto; in April of this year there were 338. I am not too good at arithmetic, certainly not at rapid calculation, but that looks to me to be a reduction of about 60 per cent. In May of last year there were 805 applicants; this year the number was up to 971. In June of last year—I hope the parliamentary secretary is listening carefully because this is when the program was