

*Indian-Eskimo Employment Authority*

acceptable to the people in the area, nor has it been acceptable to the government nor to the contractors who go there. In most cases we destroy what they have, and leave nothing in its place. We have never solved long term problems that we encounter there, such as making people in those areas better able to look after themselves than they were before we went there.

There is only one area in which we have been able to assist people in the high Arctic, and that is in the development of artifacts. We worked with the people and we assisted them to develop their own cultural abilities, and to market the products of their art in a way that has served their needs. The co-operatives that have been developed under Canadian patent of Indian and Eskimo craft in the Arctic have been one of the few bright spots that I can look back to over the years. I believe that this was more by accident than by design.

If we were more willing to ask the people in the north what their needs and what their methods of work are, we would find that many of their artists are willing to work long hours but prefer to do their work at their own pace. They do not punch a clock, nor do their work the white man's way, and they have been highly successful. Whenever we have tried to make them adapt to our way of working we have been less than successful; in fact we have often been destructive.

In the light of the fact that these people cannot speak for themselves, that in many cases they are divided in their organizations, and that they are not able to present the case to us, we should take advantage of the opportunity to institute, through the committee, a study of this matter which will allow us to help the native people in the north. I think that this bill merits our support, and will provide the kind of vehicle we need to achieve this.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Penner):** Is the House ready for the question?

**Some hon. Members:** Question.

● (1630)

**Mr. Art Lee (Vancouver East):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to compliment my colleague on his initiative in presenting this bill to the House. The high rate of unemployment among native people, not only in the north, but throughout Canada, is a concern we all share.

The Department of Manpower and Immigration and other departments have developed various programs to ensure native people the opportunity to participate in the labour market. With these, we have met with relative success. Undoubtedly improvements can be made. The bringing together of representatives of Indian and Eskimo people in Canada with industries, labour unions, and representatives of federal and provincial departments as proposed in this bill, is worth noting. I am in firm agreement that the co-operative efforts of all facets of labour and industry, both private and public, to deal with this specific problem can have immeasurable benefits.

We have made real progress in developing federal-provincial mechanisms for joint planning and co-operation in the manpower field, and will continue our efforts in this regard. Furthermore, our talks with business and labour

[Mr. Peters.]

leaders encourage me to believe that they are ready for a new partnership in Canada, with government, to produce a healthier work environment. As a result I can strongly support my colleague's contention that more can be done.

However, mechanisms presently exist in the Manpower and Immigration Department to establish the kind of consultative body that is being proposed in this bill. In the department the Canada Manpower and Immigration Council has, as one of its functions, the responsibility to advise the minister on all matters pertaining to the effective utilization and development of manpower resources in Canada. Furthermore the council has authority to set up committees or boards nationally, regionally and locally to deal with specific areas of concern.

**Mr. Peters:** It sure has been a dismal failure.

**Mr. Lee:** Recently a task force on manpower services to native peoples has been set up in the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development to respond to many of the issues my colleague has identified. Within the structure of the task force the department has developed the means whereby native organizations will play an important role, both at the national and regional level. With this kind of involvement I am confident that positive developments will result.

Under the auspices of the Canada Manpower and Immigration Council advisory boards are set up to deal with adult occupational training, adjustment of immigrants, the co-ordination of rehabilitation services for disabled persons, and manpower and immigration research. Perhaps the establishment of an advisory board on the unemployment problems of native people can be incorporated as well within the Canada Manpower and Immigration Council. This board can then be incorporated within the council, providing for a more effective and consistent vehicle for the achievement of those recommendations outlined in the bill under our consideration.

Furthermore, Mr. Speaker, I submit that this bill would perpetuate the distinction between native people and other Canadians. I am opposed to another distinction because I believe this would result in unwarranted discrimination between native people and others. Certainly the native people have different cultural backgrounds, and for that I am grateful. They should be encouraged to sustain their heritage, but at the same time they should be regarded as Canadians first.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, I represent a riding which to a large extent is an ethnic one, so I am well aware of the cultural shock that many landed immigrants have to deal with when they first come to Canada. I suspect that to a certain extent this cultural shock also applies to many of our native people.

Just this week, Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Capilano (Mr. Huntington) made some statements regarding the whole issue of assimilation, which statements could be construed as racist against Asians.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Lee:** I, for one, believe the hon. member when he says, "I am not a racist". Having read his speech, however, I firmly believe that his statements were made out of