

Manpower and Immigration Council

Mr. O'Keefe: Mr. Chairman, possibly it is because of my hon. friend's laryngitis but I am not sure whether I heard him correctly. I thought he said that the effect of the manpower program on Bell Island in Newfoundland was almost nil. May I point out that nearly 2,000 people have been moved from Bell Island to places where they can obtain employment. The cost of this project was half a million dollars.

Mr. McCleave: The hon. member must have laryngitis of the ear because had he heard me correctly he would have known that I had praise for that program and no denigration of it whatever.

Mr. Brewin: Mr. Chairman, I should like to reiterate our general approval of the resolution and the proposal to create this particular council dealing with the problems of manpower and immigration. Indeed, it seems to us it is absolutely essential that in the administration of these two highly important subjects we have a council composed of the widest possible representation of knowledgeable people in Canada. We certainly believe that this council, composed I hope of people of a very high calibre, has a very valuable function to perform.

I should like to underline the point already made by the hon. member for Winnipeg North in respect of the personal tragedies and the grave economic loss involved in the lack of proper planning with regard to manpower policies as indicated by the legislation that was introduced and passed by this house in April. I should like to give some details to supplement what has been said already by my friend, the hon. member for Winnipeg North.

In the *Globe and Mail* of July 21 Mr. A. W. Fair, who is the co-ordinator of the program of the board of education for immigrants and for adult training, said:

Toronto's adult retraining program will dwindle to an enrolment of a few hundred by Christmas, barring changes in the regulations governing it, the Toronto co-ordinator predicted yesterday.

The same press story in the *Globe and Mail* concluded with these words:

The immigrants who were taking classes now are swamping the society's office looking for any kind of work. "They are discouraged. But they won't ask for welfare because of their pride. On humanitarian grounds alone, somebody's got to do something," he said.

He was referring to the situation created by the recent regulations which, as the hon. member for Winnipeg North pointed out, cut

[Mr. McCleave.]

down substantially the number of those who can take retraining because of the particular qualifications required.

I have in front of me an article which appeared in the *Ottawa Journal* of July 15. I should like to read one paragraph:

But now, not quite four months after introduction of the legislation, widespread discontent with the program is voiced by many Ontario educators. Comments on the program implementation range from "a potentially serious problem" to "a national scandal."

In the *Toronto Star*—I do not have the exact date but it was in the month of July—a long article appeared under the heading "Retraining Denied, Italian Immigrants Would Leave Canada". The first paragraph of the article reads as follows:

Scores of Italian immigrants are considering leaving Canada because tough federal restrictions have cut them off from retraining funds, the administrator of the Italian Immigrant Aid Society said today.

"Some of the newcomers who come to us are just walking around the streets," said Mrs. Isa Scotti. "They are in despair."

Farther down in the same story we find the following:

The federal government's new regulations have already resulted in the closing of one adult retraining centre in Metro and two more will shut their doors Sept. 21 because of the lack of applicants. A. W. Fair, co-ordinator of manpower training for the Toronto Board of Education, said the number of trainees now enrolled in courses in Metro is about 4,000—a drop of more than 2,000 since the new rules came into force.

My friend, the hon. member for Winnipeg North, pointed out how the number has dropped even farther. The article continues:

Forty teachers already have lost their jobs because of the decrease in students and another 70 will be let go before Christmas.

I should like to call the minister's attention to this sentence in the story:

Provincial education officials met with Manpower Minister Jean Marchand on Tuesday to seek relief from the new federal government regulations, which went into effect April 1.

At this week's meeting, Marchand denied—

He speaks rather familiarly of the minister.

—immediate aid, but provincial officials came away optimistic that federal assistance would be forthcoming in a few months.

The result of this is well set out in an editorial in the *Globe and Mail* of July 24 under the heading, "A Rule That May Ruin A Good Program", in which the following is pointed out:

There are few sounder investments in the nation's future than government spending on retraining