

*Private Members' Business*

SITTING RESUMED

The House resumed at 1.58 p.m.

**PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS**

[English]

**EMPLOYMENT****FEDERALLY FUNDED TRAINING PROGRAMS****Mr. Steven W. Langdon (Essex—Windsor)** moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of requiring that employers who benefit from federally-funded training programs provide long-term employment to trainees.

He said: Madam Speaker, it is particularly fortuitous that this piece of private members' legislation should be coming before the House on the day that the latest unemployment statistics for the country have been released.

These unemployment statistics represent, I would have to say, a serious shock since they have taken unemployment to a level of 10.2 per cent in the country, a level which is the highest we have seen in Canada since 1985. Perhaps what is most disturbing is that when one looks at these unemployment statistics, some of the details are particularly difficult, particularly hard to accept.

One sees, for instance, that the loss in permanent jobs has been especially dramatic. Comparing the figures for February of last year with the figures for February of this year which have just come out, there is a total job loss of 420,000 permanent jobs. That is a staggering figure. It is a statistic, but of course it represents hundreds of thousands of people across this country and hundreds of thousands of families who have seen their prospects which they thought were secure for themselves and their children destroyed in the past year.

We have talked, in the course of the New Democratic economic recovery tour that has been going across the country, with a number of groups in many different cities in the country. I recall one statement especially, which struck home in a very powerful way. It was a statement from somebody in Cambridge, Ontario who said to me that in the 1981-1982 recession when a lot of people were out of work it was nevertheless the case that their factories remained. Those factories, people expected,

would eventually get back to work and the jobs that had been lost would return.

What has happened in this recession—and it is this which is so tragic—is that people see the factories in which they have worked, the shops in which they have worked, the companies for which they have worked, in very many cases closing up. We have a bankruptcy rate which is even greater than in 1981-1982. We have a great many companies shifting out of the country as a result of the United States free trade deal, moving activities to the United States.

There are other companies that are making decisions to shift to Mexico, to the Maquiladora section of northern Mexico, where they feel they will be able to serve the American market, and eventually if free trade with Mexico goes through the Canadian market, from that extremely low wage part of North America. The jobs have not just disappeared for a time as these people see it, but the jobs have disappeared as they see it permanently. There sense of despair, a sense of tremendous frustration and a sense of tremendous anger which we have heard as a consequence.

I hope that this transfer of plants to the United States, this transfer of economic activity south, is not something which will have permanently eliminated the jobs that have been lost. I believe that there are things that we could be doing as a country to get these jobs back and to stop more jobs from disappearing.

Unfortunately the recent government budget does not seem to have reflected some of those changes which in my view were necessary. One such change, it seems to me, has to be in the area of training.

I believe we have to adopt a philosophy to move this country ahead through what I would call investment in the future. That can include a vast number of things. It can include investment in research and development, investment in the basic education system of the country, and investment in the infrastructure.

It must, I believe above all, involve investment in skill training for the future. Our capacity to be successful as an economy down the road depends very much on having the skilled people to be able to work in what one might call a high value added society. That is a society where we are not producing basic, easily produced commodities which lead us inevitably into competition with Third World countries, but which leads us into new product areas, into new and sophisticated production techniques