

*Unemployment Measures Lacking*

We now seem to have a surfeit of welders in most parts of the country, largely because this is an easy course to teach. When I say "easy", I mean it is easy in terms of instructors and the cost of teaching. However, no one has come up and set any standards. They seem to vary from one region to another, one community to another and one province to another. There is no clear pattern right across the country as to how we are meeting the challenge of unemployment. These people, when they are taking the courses are provided with the equivalent of unemployment insurance. There is a good response, initially, to many of the courses.

However, we have no indication at all that they are really effective. We have no indication at all that the people who are trained really move off into the field for which they were trained. Many of us have a suspicion that many of the courses are a pleasant form of welfare, and we are not sure that this is a form of welfare that has, going along with it, the real objective that should be part of a program, that is to elevate the skills of our people across the whole country.

Here again, we have not any federal agency of education. It is certainly arguable, in view of the prejudice that exists on this subject, particularly in the province of Quebec, whether we are going to have one. Considering the fact it is recognized now that unemployment is linked with our educational system, it seems to me that we can gain two advantages out of an educational program. The first would be to lift the level of skills across the country, and the second thing we would get from it is the psychological satisfaction there would be on the part of those people who are part of the work force if they knew that the quality or calibre of the training they were going to get was likely to have some recognition right across the whole country. At the present time, nothing like this exists and as a consequence we cannot say there is any educational officer in the federal government who has a picture of what these training programs are doing. There is not any official in the federal government who can tell you what has been the consequence of this massive building program that was followed out under the Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act.

I have been involved, Mr. Speaker, in the problems of the railroad community. Over the past decade railway workers have gradually shifted and changed from being one of the most confident and optimistic groups of workers into one of the most pessimistic. They have tried, and are still trying, through their union organizations, to take a number of steps to give people greater security in the face of the technical changes that are

occurring such as the master agency, centralized traffic control, terminal runthroughs, and a lot of other different phrases used by the railroads. I understand that on the northern line of the Canadian National they are running some freights with as many as 280 cars, that is 280 box cars. When you realize that a decade ago a 60 car train was quite a sizeable train, you can see the scale of the improvement in productivity, you can understand better the impact upon the railroad workers.

Well, in the past railroaders have tried to meet these things in their negotiations with the railways by a definite fund that will, as a result of the contributions of a certain small percentage, help those people who are separated from those jobs. But again this has been supposedly in effect for a year, and it has not been nailed down as yet. We happen to have a discussion going on at the present time in a microcosm of this house on what responsibilities the railways should bear in the separation of people from their employment after many years in it, and the responsibilities for retraining, movement of personnel, and the loss of real estate values to someone in a community whose whole economic basis disappears.

Again it seems to me the trade unions and the railways are approaching this realistically from the point of view of their own interests. The trade unions want very much that the railways should accept these responsibilities, and of course the railways are backing away from this and are saying this would discriminate against them as an industry, and that really the responsibility lies with the government. Of course basically this is what the trade unions come back to, because if the railways are not going to be forced into accepting the responsibility, then the unions say the government should.

If the government should accept the responsibility in this particular case, as I believe it should, then we need to fit that into a much larger picture. The unemployment that has been caused by technological change is the most disturbing of all to the Canadian people. I repeatedly find in areas such as pulp mills, in the woods, on the railways and in shipping, where technical improvements have cut out so many jobs, that the workmen who remain have lost confidence and begin to feel insecure. Those who lose out cannot really understand it.

I might mention I had a letter the other day from a man who said we could solve our unemployment problems by simply forcing the railways to run trains no longer than 40 box cars. This of course is in the spirit of the people who tried to break up looms early in the industrial revolution. Today we have a