

National Training Act

Mr. Ian Deans (Hamilton Mountain): Mr. Speaker, I will speak for only five minutes. I do not want to take a lot of time. I know that people are eager to have the bill go to committee. With that in mind, I will keep my remarks shorter than I intended.

I am a little puzzled and somewhat perplexed by the expression "occupational training". I have wondered about it since I was 15 years old. I went to a technical high school and was trained to do certain technical things. Although they served me well in terms of being able to analyse problems of a mechanical nature, what served me better was that in the process I received an education.

I am not sure that the norms and practices of years gone by of training people for specific jobs is a very satisfactory way of proceeding today. There are far too many changes in the workplace for anyone to be able to make an accurate analysis of what might be considered adequate training for any young or not so young person in an effort to provide them with the skills necessary to enable them to lead a reasonable life through their working years. I do not know what you would offer a young person in terms of advice, even if you can provide them with training. I have two sons. One is now almost 21 and the other is coming on 20. For the past six years I have been thinking about what kind of advice to give them in terms of where they should go for their future, what kind of training and education they should take, what are the job possibilities and how long they would last. If they were to start a training program today, would they still have that same job opportunity after having completed three or four years of occupational or other kinds of training?

I have come to the conclusion that, with few exceptions, the answer to the question is no. There likely would be no jobs for them, even if you were to make some kind of analysis today as to what kind of job availability and job market there was. At the moment I do not know what we would urge young people to train for. I do not know what kind of training we would give them, what kind of suggestion we would make with regard to it. The question is, training to do what?

There is a tremendous problem in Canada. To a great extent it rests with companies not recognizing and planning for the future. Too many companies found it far too easy to reach offshore to find individuals who had the necessary basic skills and could make the transition to employment in Canada. As a result, far too many major and not so many major corporations had no training or on the job program that would raise the skill levels of people in their operation.

If you were trying to run a manpower centre, for example, the kind of co-operation you would need from a broad cross-section of the manufacturers in this country would not be forthcoming. There is no willingness on the part of the vast majority of manufacturers to offer to those people who must co-ordinate the educational process what the future holds in their particular field of endeavour. They are afraid to sit down and openly discuss their plans for the future for fear they might give their competition some kind of insight into where

they are going and how they propose to get there. Therefore, it is awfully difficult to imagine how we will ever get these training programs in place and get them to work satisfactorily.

I realize it is almost six o'clock. There is much more I would like to say, but I will not. I do want to say that I have come to the realization that the best possible thing we can do for our young people is to give them the maximum—

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Ethier): It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock this evening.

At 6 p.m. the House took recess.

[English]

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

Mr. Deans: Mr. Speaker, I intend to be brief, as I have to go to a finance committee to discuss matters of interest rates. I do want, first of all, to go back to my last sentence when I ended at six o'clock. I ended on a word that would make no sense to anyone if they were to read what I was saying. I am not sure that many people in the country would read it anyway, but that is not important.

An hon. Member: You never know.

Mr. Deans: I have come to the realization that the best possible thing that we can do for young people in particular is to give them the broadest, most comprehensive amount of general education. I want to see a system that opens up their minds to the widest possible scope of occupations, that provides them with the opportunities to learn about and to use the latest and the most innovative equipment. In that way, as time passes their aptitude to use that equipment and their interest in pursuing a line of endeavour that would either fit into or not fit into the areas of education provided to them would become clear.

I believe we must do more to encourage the major employers to become part of that integrated program I am speaking of, to give them that sense of national purpose. When speaking about education in the broadest possible sense, or training in the more narrow sense, one realizes that there is an obligation on employers at every level to be co-operative. They should make available the opportunities for not so young people who may be going through the retraining process, or young people going through a training process, to go into the work place and actually see in operation the equipment they are being educated to use or training to use, depending on your use of the words.

We must make sure that on the job training is not simply a training in in-house skills that might just fit one employer but that rather it is a more universally portable training. In that manner, it would allow more insight to persons who may be in a general way defined as pipefitters—for want of a better term or better occupation—but who find that what they were taught