

So the Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act was amended in such a way as to make it a lot more generous than the previous one. The new act enables a worker to be retrained, but as the honourable member for York South (Mr. Lewis) said, a single piece of legislation is not enough to check unemployment. It is true that the Technical and Vocational Training Assistance Act does not systematically fight unemployment. It is rather aimed at fighting one type of unemployment and, even within that type, a given category of unemployed, namely those who can be retrained or rehabilitated.

It is a partial solution. We have never suggested that we could put an end to unemployment through this measure, but it has enabled us to rehabilitate thousands of Canadian workers who would have been not only unemployed but also unskilled. If we have succeeded through that legislation, Mr. Speaker, in giving new hope to 25,000, 30,000 or 50,000 Canadian workers, that legislation will have achieved its aim. I feel that instead of trying to downgrade it, we should endeavour to improve it and make it more efficient, in order that it may achieve its object. But once again, such legislation was never meant to put an end to unemployment in Canada. Whoever makes such a statement has never read it.

To my knowledge, no hon. member on this side of the house has suggested—

[*English*]

Mr. Broadbent: Would the minister permit a question? Do I understand the minister is suggesting that the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) was attempting to pull down the manpower retraining program when he suggested it was inadequate to deal with the broader problem of unemployment?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Marchand: Mr. Speaker, I only say that the hon. member for York South has been very hard on this legislation and on the former Manpower Department which, he says, has not succeeded in eliminating unemployment in Canada. I cannot refer precisely to his text, but that is what I can remember from it.

Not even the Manpower Department is intended to fight general unemployment in Canada.

My new department will have a much greater opportunity to achieve that end. The Department of Manpower has employment

Alleged Failure to Reduce Unemployment and rehabilitation services. The only program which really grappled with seasonal employment, was the winter works program. The other branches of the department are not at all engaged or trying to remedy the situation—it is not their function nor their purpose. However, the necessary instruments to fight that particular type of unemployment and to rehabilitate the workers are available to the department.

An attack against that legislation or the department once again would be of no avail because we have to consider unemployment as it is. If we want to fight it, not only one measure but a series of measures have to be introduced. First of all there is the kind of unemployment which is due to a lack of general growth in the country and which can be, I confess, the result of the general policy of the government, of its financial, fiscal or public expenditures policy. This is the unemployment phenomenon which, at a given time, appears all across the country.

I believe the problems to be real at that level but I do not think that the situation could be described as a tragedy. The tragedy lies in the field of seasonal and regional unemployment which prevails especially the Maritimes, in eastern Quebec, in northern Ontario, in the northern part of the western provinces. These areas are really confronted with serious problems. We are trying to come up with and develop formulas which might alleviate this kind of pernicious unemployment, which will not go away in spite of all our efforts, and which of course is a source of tremendous problems for those who are affected by it.

What we will try to do with this new department is to think in new terms the whole philosophy of regional development in our country.

I cannot promise the house we are going to work wonders, but I can give it the assurance that we shall make serious efforts. In fact, we shall bring radical changes, for certain laws, well thought out at the outset, are no longer effective and some of them were even detrimental in some way to the workers.

For instance, the industrial development legislation, or ARDA, has often been used to bring about excessive development in some industrial fields, the result of which was to saturate the market and create an unemployment problem that we cannot solve anymore. There are therefore defects to be corrected and we are aware of that.