

*Income Tax Act*

Yesterday it was clear that the government opposite had no intention of differentiating between labour-intensive industries and capital-intensive industries, although I am sure that the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Mahoney) would like to spend more time expounding theories in this area. I submit that the real crux of our remarks lies in this: the government must distinguish between labour-intensive and capital-intensive industries.

Yesterday, the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Lundrigan) suggested that he could not understand what my colleague from Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) was referring to. This may be another case of "let us not confuse the issue with facts". If the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate did not understand what my colleagues was suggesting, then, I suggest, he does not understand the facts of life. May I also suggest that he does not understand the concept of the equality of people. It seems that hon. members opposite are unable to recognize the difference between poverty and wealth; to them, all people are equal.

• (3:50 p.m.)

Not long ago the minister drew attention to the promptness with which his department answered questions placed on the order paper. I wonder why the department is not just as prompt to inform the House of Commons of the contents of the Bryden Committee Report. Why is he not as prompt in supplying information to the House in relation to other studies which have been conducted? They have not been tabled in the House of Commons even though their contents have been leaked to industry and to the public.

The minister should appear in the House more often to answer questions relating to his department. Consider his attendance record back to November 10—I use that date as a convenient point of reference. He should have been present on 19 occasions to answer questions, to make known to members what some of the programs upon which his department is engaged really mean. But we find he was here on only eight occasions. I give the minister due credit for the fact that he was often overseas doing something for the national benefit, but it remains true that questions arise in the House of Commons which should be answered and which can be answered adequately only by the minister who exercises responsibility for the department.

Listening to the observations made by the hon. member who spoke before I rose, one would get the impression that everything connected with this program was going well. As we look at the definitions in the bill on pages two and three we really must ask ourselves what is the purpose of this whole exercise in connection with manpower training programs. Reading the letters which are sent to us we find that many people are failing to obtain the benefits the government would like to suggest are provided by manpower retraining and on-the-job training programs.

I wish to draw attention to one of the real difficulties arising from the present arrangements by quoting a letter which came to me from Saskatchewan. The writer attended a technical institute in his province where the department of manpower sponsors various programs. He writes:

I am presently enrolled in a Canada Manpower sponsored grade XI course at Saskatchewan Technical Institute in Moose Jaw and should like to proceed to a similar grade XII course. However, a grade XII course is taught in Regina only. Presently there are approximately 20 students who will qualify to fill the one available opening in grade XII in Regina.

In addition to this there are two other students and myself who cannot qualify for grade XII due to the fact that we spent four months in grade X, five months in grade XI and we are allowed a total of 52 weeks only.

I would appreciate it, sir, if you could possibly explain the method I could use to further my education through Canada Manpower.

Because I am a man with a wife and five children, it is my desire to raise my standards through a university degree in journalism and to enter the field of labour relations.

It is of the utmost importance to me and my family that any possible government assistance not be withheld at this stage.

Any consideration given to me on this matter will be greatly appreciated.

As to the question raised in this letter I can only say that many representations have been made to the government and to the minister to allow some discretion to local officers when assessing particular situations. Government offices operate only on the basis of regulations. They boast about the number of people taking part in retraining programs but the very people who possibly are in greatest need of two or three extra weeks are unable to obtain consideration because the number of weeks' training is limited by regulation to 52. I suggest the government should consider amending its regulations by order in council to enable further time to be granted in cases where this is desirable. Surely local officers could be given some leeway with respect to cases like the one to which I have just called attention.

Returning to the question of study and analysis, it is a fact that departments themselves invariably set up an internal committee to analyse the effectiveness of their own programs. I would suspect myself that many such committees would produce a subjective report which would suit its own needs, not the type of analysis which would deal frankly with all the realities involved and enable all those who were interested to know exactly what was going on. It is extremely necessary that an objective analysis be made by people outside the department, possibly even by Treasury Board itself. We are aware that the Auditor General expressed certain reservations as to the manner in which public funds had been disbursed in connection with manpower programs. The observations put out on December 16 by the department refer to the results of the manpower training program survey, indicating that of the nearly 70 per cent of former students now working, only 33 per cent had held jobs before entering their courses.

Reference is made in this report to a publication of the Economic Council of Canada. If we look at this latter publication we read at the bottom of page 114 the following statement: "The method employed in the department's present model raises some doubts as to the confidence with which one can attribute benefits to training per se". Surely, this observation should in itself be enough to suggest that an objective analysis should be undertaken by someone other than the departmental minister concerned.