

Manpower and Immigration Council

and a very convenient way of saying that the provinces are trying to gain a bargaining position with the federal government. I hope that the minister will not think I am so naïve as not to recognize that a certain amount of jockeying does take place not only among the provinces themselves but between the provinces and the federal government. We recognize that as a fact of life. But again that is not the issue.

We think that the federal government has not provided leadership in this field, that it has been somewhat irresponsible in bringing immigrants to this country and not following through in a way which is clearly within the jurisdiction of the federal government and certainly within the area of its moral obligation. This applies not only to retraining; it applies to housing, to the kind of promises which are made, the advertising which takes place and the recruiters that we are sending to other countries in the world. We are not being fair. I suggest that it is time for fairness in this country and time for leadership on the part of the government in the whole field of manpower and immigration.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Tardif): If the minister speaks now he will close the debate.

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Manpower and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. I will start by answering the hon. member for Waterloo South (Mr. Saltsman). I do not think I said—I was speaking French at the time and there might have been some slight difference in the English translation—that everything in my department was perfect, that there were no frictions or deficiencies at all, because I know that there are. We cannot make changes of the magnitude of those we have made without encountering some trouble somewhere or making adaptations.

This new program came into effect only on April 1, 1967, not five years but six months ago. In the field of adult training, we are still operating under the old agreement for another year, so I think it is a little soon to state in the house that this program is a failure simply because during the last five or six months it did not correspond exactly to what hon. members had in mind. So many things had to be changed that I am ready to accept that there are some well-founded grievances concerning our training program.

I do not know how many times I will have to repeat this, Mr. Speaker, but may I say to the hon. member for Waterloo South that if it is true that a skilled immigrant cannot use his

skill in Canada because he cannot speak one of the two official languages, then that person is entitled to apply for a course under this retraining program. If this policy is not adopted by any particular centre then it is not following the instructions which have been given to it. This is our policy, and we are ready to assume the expenses incurred and to pay allowances if such an immigrant needs language instruction before he can use his skill.

Mr. Saltsman: Tomorrow we will put it to the test.

Mr. Marchand: Yes. If hon. members want me to repeat that in French so that it is very clear I am ready to do so. However, I think we have a good translation service here. As I say, this program is not perfect. Probably no one will ever produce a perfect program of this sort. But I think it is a sound program and that it will achieve the objectives that are outlined in the legislation.

I do not think that the problem of federal-provincial relations at this stage has anything to do with the development of this program. I think that all our differences were settled at the last conference which was held in July, and I have every reason to believe that the program will go down well with all provinces, including the hon. member's province. I know that in Newfoundland they are happy. Hon. members may say that they have to be happy anyhow but nevertheless they are happy. That is so in many other provinces. In Quebec we have formed a consultative committee for training adults, and everything will be all right. I think within a few months the program will take shape. It will not be perfect; one must remember that. There will still be grievances. We shall have grievances all the time, but it will really become the program that I thought it would be.

● (5:50 p.m.)

Concerning the private agencies may I say that it is not the purpose of my department to kill such private agencies. But I do want our placement offices and our Canada manpower centres to do an efficient and good job. If the private agencies cannot compete it means that they do not have the spirit of private enterprise. We are not going to kill them. That is not our intention. They have their roles and I think some of them are useful to the country. I am sure they can compete very successfully with our Canada manpower centres. As a result they will continue serving. We do not intend to destroy them but we do want