

*Business of Supply*

with each passing year. Canada does not have this kind of problem in those dimensions. That does not mean that we are being over critical or are in any way exaggerating when we say that the problem of rising unemployment in this country is becoming serious and that the minister must show more initiative in grappling with it.

● (5:50 p.m.)

As other hon. members have pointed out, the rate of unemployment in this country has increased over the past several months and this is reflected in particular in terms of the projected unemployment rate for students during the coming summer months. It may be that the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. MacEachen) got some satisfaction out of twitting the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) for showing a preoccupation in his speech with the particular aspect of unemployment facing students this summer. Whether or not it gave the minister any satisfaction, the fact remains that even last summer the problem manifested itself in that a large number of young people were very concerned. We understand that this summer the problem will be worse.

But in the interval between last summer and now, the minister gave no indication of any specific new ideas as to what to do to cope with the problem. I cannot accept the minister's suggestion, which he made about half an hour ago or so, that the idea advanced that certain students should be given assistance in job placement on the basis of priority according to need is not feasible because his department does not have the administrative machinery to do it. I suggest that that argument is very weak because my understanding is that there exists at the present time at the federal level administrative machinery for assessing student needs with respect to applications for student loans, and it has worked. Why cannot that machinery simply be made available to the Department of Manpower and Immigration to assist students in finding jobs this summer, the next summer or whenever the need arises? That is one specific suggestion which I put forward in response to the challenge from the hon. member for Davenport (Mr. Caccia).

The second suggestion concerns the matter of the educational training of adults. I think the government should admit now that it made a mistake at the time of the passage of the bill and ask this house to pass amending legislation to remove those clauses in the act which are a serious obstacle to all

young people who, upon leaving high school and enrolling in different courses of manpower training, find they are not eligible for manpower training allowances. The transitional period of three years specified in the act is entirely too long and entirely unjustified. I can recall so well the words uttered in the house, at the time the act was passed, by my colleague the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow). He said that this was a most unwarranted section which would cause much difficulty and unhappiness to many young people. This is also my experience as a member of parliament trying to deal with case problems brought to me by young people having difficulty in qualifying for manpower training allowances.

I have another suggestion which I should like to put forward, and I invite the hon. member for Davenport to help me in making representations to the minister and to other members of the cabinet to get rid of that obnoxious section in the act which provides for the occupational training of adults. This would be another small, concrete and tangible step toward helping to ease the problem of unemployment and of manpower training in this country.

I also think the minister is well aware of the fact that under the present provisions of the act a hardship is experienced by people enrolled in manpower training courses in that when their instructors go on holiday no matter when that may be, no matter what the financial circumstances of the trainee may be and no matter how many dependents he may have, the person in training has his allowance discontinued. It can happen at the most unexpected time and in the most inopportune circumstances. I believe some action should be taken by the minister to change this. This is a second section of the manpower training policy and of the legislation that should be changed in my opinion.

The third suggestion I should like to make is that, as may be expected, when some people choose the courses that are offered under manpower training which make them eligible for a training allowance, they find that the range of courses is limited or does not suit them. They may then enroll in courses that go beyond 40 or 44 weeks or that are of 52 weeks duration. They may find that it is better for them, in the long range, to enroll in a course that may be of two years duration at an institute of applied arts or an institute of technology, but the moment they enroll in a course that is of a longer duration than one year, which is effectively 44 weeks, they