

*Canada-U.S. Free Trade Agreement**[Translation]*

Free trade will offer new opportunities to the industry. In some cases the only factor preventing a company from expanding is a shortage of skilled workers. Thanks to the employment planning skilled labour shortage program, Quebec's Bécancour aluminum plant has so far trained 97 employees in computer assisted design.

The skilled labour shortage program provides financial assistance for employers seeking to train workers in trades where skilled labour is not readily available and for which demand is stronger. It was under this program that the aluminum plant could apply for a full repayment of all training expenditures and 50 per cent of the wages of workers.

● (1600)

[English]

Another traditional area of concern in labour market adjustment is single industry or resource-based communities experiencing hard times. In Revelstoke, B.C. the unemployment rate currently stands at 10.3 per cent, which is still too high, but it is down from 15 per cent a year ago, and from 20 per cent two years ago when that area was selected under the Community Futures Program. Since then this labour market has mobilized itself for a come-back.

Community Futures Options build on the existing strengths of the community by emphasizing entrepreneurship and worker adjustment. The Business Development Centre Option, for example, has offered potential small businesses, technical and marketing advice, as well as start-up capital. Although the Business Development Centre has been operating for less than one year, some 46 new full-time jobs in this city have been created, and 55 more jobs are anticipated in the coming year. Now, that is success.

Increasingly, we are finding in areas of high unemployment that it makes sense to help people to come up with their own job opportunities. Helping people on unemployment insurance or social assistance move into self-employment is another element of Community Futures' support. As well, Community Futures offers relocation assistance and training through community colleges.

Across Canada we have approved \$300 million under this program for some 200 community areas. In total, we are committing \$1.7 billion this year to facilitate adjustment from coast to coast under all Canadian Jobs Strategy programs. It is no surprise to us—and we are

very proud of the fact—that the OECD in 1988 singled out our Canadian Jobs Strategy, the Canadian Jobs Strategy of our country, of this Government, as a good example of an initiative that seeks local solutions to local problems by tailoring measures to local and individual needs.

Just as the Canadian Jobs Strategy helps individuals and communities cope with change in the labour market, the Industrial Adjustment Service assists Canadian companies in need of support. As a co-operative model for helping workers and management deal with technological and market change, the Industrial Adjustments Service's reputation is second to none.

Under IAS, labour and management set up joint committees to work with an outside labour market consultant. Together, they establish an action plan to resolve particular human resource problems, problems that may be unique to their company but where other experience can help them. To cite an example of its effectiveness, IAS recently helped focus the energies of 1,300 employees at the Firestone Tire Company in Hamilton after permanent closure had been announced. You remember how we were harangued in this House, Mr. Speaker, about this closure? The joint committees set a goal finding comparable jobs for every worker. Firestone paid the salaries of 10 full-time people on the adjustment committees. These committees surveyed thousands of employers, placed resumés on cable TV and worked closely with the local Canada Employment Centre. The result was a placement rate of 85 per cent with continuing efforts to find jobs and training for the remainder. Just in this week's paper there was an interview with some of the employees saying how well that system had worked.

The IAS solution, it must also be emphasized, applies as well to companies that are experiencing rapid expansion, not just those that are experiencing lay-offs. Mohawk Oil in Burnaby, British Columbia, used an adjustment committee to help it establish a human resource plan to complement its aggressive expansion plan.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, it must be pointed out that for some time now the Industrial Adjustment Service and its advantages have been known in international circles. A number of American states and spokesmen for the European Community have sent senior officials to Canada where they will attempt to determine how IAS principles could apply in their respective countries.