

*National Training Act*

other reports prepared under other governments, have highlighted the drawbacks and inefficiencies of the current adult occupational training system.

That is Mr. Marois' basic analysis of occupational training issues. Having expressed his views on this question, he said this to the federal minister, and I quote:

If you are really prepared to listen to the arguments and suggestions of Quebec and then take them into serious consideration, I would be glad to meet with you with a view to making this project an acceptable tool geared to the needs of Quebec workers and employers.

Mr. Speaker, the province of Quebec called for a meeting with the federal minister. The federal minister did have talks with the governments of the other provinces, but why—I do not know—at the last minute did he not meet a representative of the government of Quebec?

● (1640)

[English]

What I have said in French, basically, is that the Quebec government has made a fundamental analysis of the training program which is before us. It has said that any national training program has to do a couple of things. The first one is to support the economic development of a region of the country. Second, it must correct the social inequalities which exist in society. Those are the two fundamental points which I make about this legislation as well. This is why I spoke of the need for a new training system, the grant-levy system which is not in the legislation, and that is why I focused upon the matter of functional illiteracy which is a matter of social inequality.

The federal minister took the trouble to meet with a representative of the nine anglophone provinces. I applaud him for that. The results of that work were useful. The minister and the representative of the Ontario government were able to come up with a wording which better expressed the desire for federal-provincial co-operation in the matter of training, yet at the same time he received a communication from the Quebec minister calling for a meeting in order to discuss what he considered to be problems with the training legislation. The meeting did not take place. I do not want to underestimate what I think would be the difficulties in negotiations between the federal government and the provincial government of Quebec, but once the federal government made the choice of meeting with a representative of the nine anglophone provinces, it should also have met with the representative of Quebec.

Everything in Bill C-115 depends upon negotiations, whether they are negotiations with the provinces, with unions, with employers, with native groups, or with women's groups. While there have been some positive amendments to the legislation with regard to consultations with the provinces, the actual agreements which will flesh out the training program that will operate under the legislation have not yet been made. Those

negotiations continue. It is very important that the negotiations be carried on in a sensitive fashion so that the needs and aspirations of all regions of Canada can be met.

In addition, it is very important, when the minister and his government negotiate with groups such as women's or native groups, that they be particularly sensitive to the fact that they have a very strong hand in the negotiations. If anything helpful in terms of meeting the needs of people is to come out of the negotiations, then the federal government will have to be particularly sensitive.

I mentioned these negotiations because of the fact that even after being before the committee with regard to the estimates, it is very difficult to know what the national training program will be in the end. What the training program becomes depends upon the negotiations between the government and the provinces and between the government and various groups in the country.

To sum up, basically we support the legislation, but it really does not go far enough because there is no fundamental change to the present training system and there is no real attack on the social problem of functional illiteracy which has been well identified for us. While the government in legislative amendments has indicated its commitment to the principle of a labour market institute, it has yet to act on the principle. How it acts on that principle, whether that action is satisfactory, will obviously depend upon negotiation.

One of the main weaknesses of the legislation is that training in itself is not enough. Training must relate to the economy. When the national training program was originally conceived, as we read the briefing notes which were passed out to us, it was clearly tied into the notion of resource development. The resource development and economic strategy of the government have really come to a halt. The megaprojects which were in the last budget have fallen to the ground. The government has no real economic strategy today. It is not just I who say that, it is not just I who recognize that. Training programs must be connected to economic development.

I should like to quote briefly from an article that appeared in the June 22 edition of *The Globe and Mail*. It indicated that the economy is in a tailspin which has had no equal in 28 years. It read:

The economy is in a tailspin unmatched for 28 years, and only more consumer spending or greater exports are likely to pull it out—

In my time remaining I will try to wrap up quickly. The article went on to point out the facts that we are in an economic crisis and that the government opposite is following a harsher monetary and fiscal policy than that of the Reagan administration in the United States. It is not enough just to train people; we must have jobs for them once they have completed their training. It is time for the government to take some immediate and long-term action with regard to the economic situation. Otherwise, all efforts at training will be lost.