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Co-operative education may alleviate critical skilled labour shortage

Solving Canada's employment problems is "a moral imperative as well as an economic necessity", said Minister of Employment and Immigration Lloyd Axworthy in a speech to the Canadian Association for Co-operative Education in Hamilton, August 26.

The Minister also spoke about special measures to provide job opportunities to women, native people and the handicapped. Excerpts from Mr. Axworthy's speech follow:

...I sense a growing recognition of the fact that people are the key to Canada's economic future and thus to our continued high quality of life. We know we have the resources. We know the capital is there under the right conditions. But people are the key to investing the capital, to putting the resources to work, to managing development and productivity growth. To illustrate, the Economic Council of Canada reports that 87 per cent of the growth in manufacturing productivity for the 1957-74 period came from factors other than capital and cyclical factors. To members of the council "This suggests... the importance of efforts to raise not only the skill level of Canadian labour but, perhaps more importantly, the level of managerial training and know how...."

It is fitting that, at the brink of the new decade, an intensive examination of employment problems and possible solutions has begun at the national level. In my department I have established a task force of senior officials and experts to make recommendations on an employment strategy for the 1980s. We also have a Parliamentary task force...which is concentrating on the problem of critical skill shortages....

Critical shortages

In Canada we now experience unacceptably high rates of unemployment and, simultaneously, critical shortages in skills required to seize economic development opportunities.

This paradox arises from two underlying factors; rapid industrial changes — both sectoral and regional; and demographic changes in our labour force.

Rapid industrial changes in turn result from the dramatically changed energy



Incentives for employers to train women are envisaged in new program.

environment which has caused a shift in consumption and production patterns and a westward movement of economic activity. Other factors include the continuing impact of innovation in communications and transportation, new world trade arrangements and new domestic industrial opportunities such as those in the fishing industry as a consequence of the 200-mile limit.

The other factor underlying our employment paradox is the changing composition of our labour force. The low birth-rates of the late 1960s and 1970s means that the labour force will be growing at a slower rate in years to come. In turn, this suggests that industrial adaptation will become more difficult. It will have to occur to a greater extent by redeployment of workers geographically, industrially and occupationally. We will not have large

Health and Welfare Canada

One-hundred-and-ninety-three years ago this week... The Mississauga Indians agreed to sell to the British government the land on which the city of Toronto now stands; the land was sold to the government in 1805 for £1,700 (\$615.94).