

● (2120)

Of course, Mr. Speaker, the federal government has no intention of intruding in a field which comes under provincial jurisdiction, in this case education. Since this Quebec conference in September, 1981, we have heard many provincial ministers and other provincial authorities accuse the federal government of intruding in an area of provincial jurisdiction. I believe, Mr. Speaker, that the occupational training problem in Canada must be viewed as a national problem. To be able to meet this nationwide demand, it is vital for a government to take care of regional disparities and meet regional needs so that the workers of Newfoundland, Nova Scotia or Quebec can look for jobs in the western provinces. The only way to give the required training to these workers is to have a central government which can co-ordinate all the training programs and see to it that everyone in the country can have access to the same courses in every region of Canada.

Needless to say, in spite of the present high unemployment rate, we must still seek thousands of specialized workers outside Canada each year. It is expected that Canada will need about 9,000 of these workers every year during the next five years, and one of the objectives of our new legislation is to reduce this need for foreign workers and achieve complete self-sufficiency within our own country. Canadians often say, and rightly so, that they have the capability, and the contract that was signed last week with Bombardier, the contract that this company signed with New York certainly proves that we have this capability, but we in Ottawa want Canadians in general, and this of course includes Quebecers, to have even more capability and to turn to professions that will be more satisfying in every way in the years to come. Mr. Speaker, I shall perhaps be accused of anticipating the debate concerning the new bill on occupational training, but I would like to point out that everything is interrelated in this sector, which is so essential if we want to ensure our young people a better future. This is also a matter of some urgency, as hon. members will know that the agreements renewed last year expired on March 31. In addition, it must be kept in mind that we need a national training program, because we are dealing with a truly national labour market, if we do not want to put Quebec workers who would want to work in Ontario or the western provinces at a disastrous disadvantage.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot overemphasize the need for greater manpower mobility throughout the country, which mobility has in fact been very beneficial to thousands of Quebecers, but I would like to come back to the new legislation on occupational training and mention one of its key components, namely the occupational skills development fund, which can be created only when the bill has been approved and enacted by Parliament. Indeed, the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) noted last Friday that, without such approval, we cannot allocate any funds for the construction or extension of any training facility, however urgent the need.

Supply

The federal government has already allocated \$108 million to a fund earmarked for this purpose during the current fiscal year, but the legislation must be passed before we can proceed with such a program. The various provinces as well as private non-profit training organizations will be able to receive the financial assistance provided by the occupational skills development fund. The new formula and the new legislation will widen the range of training courses available and the categories of eligible workers. It will provide a list of priority occupations and the extent of courses available in each field. Larger financial allocations will also be possible in some cases and the present requirement that adults must not have attended school for 12 months to be eligible to register for training courses will be eliminated, which will mean, for instance, that recent drop-outs will have access to the courses they need.

Workers will still be in a position to receive a more specialized training during a period extending beyond the current 52-week limit and, when applicable, help will also be extended to employers who must train abroad highly-skilled Canadian workers. Finally, agreement procedures with employers will be simplified as well as the payment to provinces of the moneys provided for in contracts, in order to simplify red tape and to speed up training. In other words, Mr. Speaker, the effort will concentrate to a larger extent on skills where workers are very much in demand, on the training of workers affected by new technologies and the training of unemployed workers to prepare them for future jobs in the coming years.

The challenge of the eighties must be met by offering our workers—and especially young people ready to enter the labour market—conditions that will enable them to play an active and fulfilling role in an expanded economy that will be increasingly technological, and particularly new technology oriented. Every Canadian must have an opportunity to be trained or re-trained to gain access to the two million-odd new jobs, both interesting and well-paid, to be generated by economic development in Canada. This will also enable our country to strengthen its competitive position on the international marketplace by increasing productivity, thus making achievements such as the Bombardier contract easier to come by.

In other words, training will now have to be oriented to future needs and be based on technological developments and on the corporate needs of the new decade. Therefore, the government's role is to determine the nature and scope of adult training needs, to delineate the main policies and supply individuals, companies, groups and provinces with financial help to enable them to undertake or provide necessary training. Provinces and their institutions are the main providers of institutional training; they are responsible for the establishment, management and implementation of programs. The two levels of government therefore have distinctive responsibilities in that respect, but they must work hand in hand so that, when this legislation is passed in this House, a great number of Canadians and especially young Canadians will have access to the labour market of the eighties thus making it possible for