

Labour Conditions

Scotia. First on the subject of training, I should say that at the end of January there were 2,425 persons in the province of Nova Scotia who had been recommended for training by my department but for whom training places were not at that time available. The provincial authorities have been trying to remedy this situation. In the past month they have found 11 additional instructors and made places available for 210 persons in the Cape Breton area in a pre-vocational upgrading course. At this date 164 other people in the area are still waiting for places.

With regard to employment at the DOSCO steel plant at Sydney, I should say that at the beginning of last year it employed 3,560 workers and at the beginning of this year 735 fewer, a decline of 20 per cent. Intensive efforts are being made to find other work for those laid off and, indeed, referrals are going on steadily. There are some important improvements in prospect. Two new industrial operations are on the point of starting up in the area, and it is expected that heavy construction work at Port Hawkesbury in the spring will draw on Sydney for much of its labour requirements. My department will make assistance for training, mobility and placement available to the full extent of the need.

In terminating this statement, Mr. Speaker, I must emphasize that my department will fulfil its responsibilities and is ready to pay training allowance to all those who are accepted. As far as training facilities are concerned, according to our agreement with the provinces this is a provincial responsibility.

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton South): Mr. Speaker, the minister of manpower indicated that he was going to make a report on the situation in Sydney, but he has reported not specifically on that area but on the situation generally in Nova Scotia with some reference to the Sydney area.

• (2:50 p.m.)

He referred to the number of men in training and the number awaiting places, a total of about 374 persons out of 1,100 workers laid off at the steel plant. The government has not considered those workers at all. There is unemployment in the area about which the government has done nothing. We have had lay-offs. Our naval base has been closed despite the fact that the former Conservative government established this as a permanent base. This government closed it after having promised the men in that area alternative

work. Despite this promise many men in our area have been laid off.

The government is trying to do one thing with one hand and is taking it away with the other when laying persons off. There have been lay-offs in Cape Breton and in Louisbourg. Because of the differences of opinion publicly expressed the government brought the men back on the job; they tried to take the credit for that. First they fired them, then they rehired them. What contradictions have we here.

When we speak of contradictions, the minister yesterday was asked to clarify the situation that has developed with respect to the crown corporation the government intends to establish. He was asked to make a statement. Now we find the minister saying one thing and the Prime Minister saying something else. First the Prime Minister agreed that the crown corporation would do something for the steel workers; then he withdrew from that stand. Behind the Prime Minister the Minister of Industry promised that the government would do something for the steel workers when the crown corporation was established. On top of that, yesterday and today we heard from the Minister of Manpower and Immigration. He was unable to say anything about the proposed development. All those remarks are on record.

We have one minister saying one thing, and the Prime Minister saying "No." Behind the Prime Minister the Minister of Industry tried to leave the impression that the unemployed people in Cape Breton would be looked after by the crown corporation. The Prime Minister denied that, too. From all this it ought to be evident to the people of Cape Breton and others across this nation that this government does not know where it is going.

Mr. David Lewis (York South): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to repeat some of the things the hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam has said. It seems to me, from the statements the Minister of Manpower and Immigration has made in the past and recently, that a serious situation has been exposed. Obviously there is not much value in having a program of mobility grants or of training and retraining if there are not facilities by which such programs can be implemented. I suggest to the minister and to the house that the situation exposed by the minister's statements requires a new look to be directed at our federal policy with regard to the assistance the federal treasury gives to the provision of