

Manpower Retraining Programs

Others required amendments to the regulations, and I am told that the recent amendment to allow a man to claim his common-law wife as a dependant for allowance purposes if the relationship has existed for one year is a direct result of the meeting. I also understand that other recommended changes will be made when the Adult Occupational Training Act is amended.

The papers prepared on the Canada Manpower training program during the meetings of October, 1968, were developed for the internal use of the department in improving the operation of the program. They are considered to be internal working documents and it is for this reason the motion is opposed. It is, as I mentioned earlier, good business practice to make use of the knowledge and experience of staff members. This is particularly true of an extensive program such as the Canada Manpower training program which brings an essential service to the various regions of the country with their differing conditions and needs.

• (5:50 p.m.)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Maurice Dupras (Labelle): Mr. Speaker, Canada is often regarded as a country of manifold opportunities, and in fact this impression proves to be right. There is no need to recall all the elements which gave us this reputation; nevertheless, it is in order to remember some developments.

Mr. Speaker, Canada has a labour force showing the largest increase in size, quality, strength, and I was going to say with much more education and training. All these are essential if our country is to maintain this reputation and go on progressing.

Canadian youth has understood this need; young people today are pursuing their studies beyond the college level.

For instance, in 1965 50 per cent of the workers 45 years of age or over had not finished primary school. On the other hand, 80 per cent of students between 20 and 24 years had completed their education beyond primary school.

[*English*]

It is accepted, then, that the younger age group possess, on the average, higher educational qualifications than, let us say, their parents. While this is all well and good and a tremendous asset to Canada, we must remember that the increase in educational standards may leave the older worker behind.

A second factor in the economic sector which affects the Canadian worker is the rapid level of change and technological improvement occurring in industry. In order to keep abreast of rapid industrial change and the demand for skilled young people, the Canadian worker finds that he must be relatively skilled. Now, if one is a young person without adult family responsibilities, it is a relatively simple task to adequately prepare himself or herself to enter the labour market.

But let us consider the very real dilemma facing the older worker who comes up against this problem. Think for a moment of this situation. An individual has been working for about ten years at a relatively unskilled job and he finds his skills are redundant. Technological advance demands that he must improve his present skills

in order to continue in his job. If he is supporting a family, then his position is particularly difficult; he cannot satisfactorily attend a full-time educational course and provide for his dependents as well. The alternatives facing this worker are few. He may attempt to find other employment, perhaps at a much lower salary, or he may apply for training under the auspices of the Canada Manpower training program.

There is where the individual approaches the Canada Manpower centre for assistance and advice. He may, along with more than 1,100,000 others who have benefited from this program, spend up to 52 or 104 weeks—depending on his needs—in vocational studies. If he lacks basic educational skills he may take an upgrading course for a maximum of 52 weeks before proceeding on to a program of occupational training, again for a maximum of 52 weeks. If he supports dependants or has been a member of the labour force for at least three years, the trainee is eligible for a living allowance during the period he attends courses.

A follow-up survey of graduates in the training program by the Department of Manpower and Immigration has shown that individuals who have studied under the Canada Manpower training program are indeed improving their prospects of employment. Trainees completing a full-time training course are surveyed as to the success of their studies in real terms. Preliminary results show that the average trainee earns 15 per cent higher wages within three months of completing the course. This is understating the gain to trainees because many of them were limited in employment prospects before training, and also it does not reflect the full earning potential of the new occupation.

The improvement in employment prospects may be even more significant than the wage increases. Well over half the trainees in the follow-up survey were unemployed when they applied for training. Seventy per cent of these were fully employed three months after completing the training course. Over 90 per cent of those with jobs before taking the training course were back at work within the survey period. According to the follow-up survey, roughly 80 per cent of graduates from skilled and educational upgrading courses found employment after training, while only 40 per cent had jobs previously.

For the benefit of hon. members who are unfamiliar with all aspects of the Canada Manpower training program I will briefly summarize its working structure and major objectives. The Canada Manpower training program was introduced in 1967 to attempt to meet the training needs of adults in the labour force. The program offers upgrading vocational training and retraining courses, it provides for the acquisition of new skills, specialized training and, in the case of upgrading, the basic knowledge necessary to begin occupational training. The program also covers language training for immigrants, apprenticeship and training-in-industry.

In order to qualify for training, applicants must be one year older than the school leaving age in their province of residence and not have attended school for the preceding 12 months. Training allowances for those who attend full-time courses are available if they have been members of the labour force for a three-year period or have one or more dependants.