

*National Training Act*

mean that the legislation is really up to par and fully meets the need. We are supporting it because it is action at a time when the need is very great, and any action, no matter how small, obviously requires some support.

We also want to give the government a chance to live up to the promises it has made in placing this legislation before the House, which it says will meet the real training needs of this country. By allowing this legislation we will give the government that opportunity, but we feel that the bill is really not sufficient or good enough, and neither is the program which will be supported by this legislation.

The reason we feel that way, Mr. Speaker, is that the legislation brings about no real and fundamental change in the training system in this country. Basically, it continues the same old approach to manpower training which has operated in Canada for the last 15 years under the old legislation. Granted, there have been some marginal improvements and they are welcome.

To give you an example of what I mean, Mr. Speaker, let me deal for a moment with the very great need for skilled workers in this nation. It is visible to any Canadian who reads newspapers that at a time when unemployment is so very high it comes as a great shock that there are still skilled jobs for which Canadians have not been trained. Somehow the training system that has been in place for the last 15 years has not met the need.

● (1630)

We feel the need was not been met for some fundamental reasons. By and large, industry does not train workers for the skilled jobs that are offered by industry. Only a very small percentage of workers are trained for skilled work. Industries do not train skilled workers because they are afraid, having spent the money to train someone for a skilled occupation, that another company will come along and take this worker from them.

We need a training system that will encourage and require training on a comprehensive basis by all sections of business. This is not provided for in this legislation. We need a comprehensive industrial training system paid for by all companies within a particular industry so that even those companies that do not have training programs but benefit from the fact that other companies do will be paying for the trained workers in the economy. Companies not training workers should be paying for this training since they benefit from the training system.

The type of system that we are talking about is a system that has been proposed by the Canadian Labour Congress. It has become known as the grant levy system. It means that every company within industry would be levied a certain amount of money in order to pay for the costs of training within that industry. Each company training, would receive grants and money for having done so. It is an equitable system which spreads the cost of training across an industry, providing funds to those companies doing the training.

This would be a comprehensive and fundamental change in our approach to training in Canada. No such change comes about by virtue of this legislation. We are continuing with the same old training system which involves incentives to industry to train, government money going from its coffers to the companies to train workers. This approach has resulted in the present situation that we face, which is one of highly skilled jobs going begging at a time of high unemployment.

Another issue not faced up to by the program to be run under the legislation is the question of functional illiteracy. Functional illiteracy is a very real and significant problem in Canada today. It was identified very clearly by the Allmand task force, which called for immediate and significant action to eliminate functional illiteracy in this country. The task force members even spoke of what they described as the ten-year right to read program. There is nothing in this legislation nor is there anything in the description of the national training program to indicate the government is taking seriously the challenge to eliminate functional illiteracy from Canadian society.

It is very important that we, as people having identified this problem, do something to solve it. There are significant numbers of people in Canada who do not have the education to hold down a job. This means a loss of wealth to the economy and an aggravation of the inequities that exist by virtue of income that people can earn in society, and it is simply a waste of Canadian human resources. There again is another fundamental problem which the government has simply not addressed in a serious way in the national training program nor in the legislation that will underpin it.

I want to make it clear that, while we support this legislation because it will be doing something in the area of training—and obviously something needs to be done even if it is not enough—we continue to criticize the government because there are fundamental training problems which the government simply has not addressed in this legislation. Nor has the government addressed them in the national training program.

This legislation falls short for another reason. It has to do with federal-provincial relations. I am thinking about two aspects. One deals with the nine anglophone provinces which came to some accommodation with the government with regard to the legislative provision. But Quebec is still left out in the cold with this legislation. Let me refer to the telegram we all received from the Quebec government under the signature of Mr. Marois, who is the Quebec minister involved in training matters. I am doing this to make the point about the concerns of the Quebec government and how it sees this legislation. Its criticisms in an early paragraph of the communication, I must say, in its fundamental principles, are pretty accurate. It reads:

*[Translation]*

The Quebec government gives top priority to adult occupational training. It is aware that this sector of vital importance to support the economic development of Quebec and to correct social inequalities needs major revamping to reach its assigned objectives. The Jean commission report in the province of Quebec and