

before coming eligible for training. Again, this is for the same reason.

We certainly do not intend to reverse our priorities completely and forget about the older workers. Many still have the problem of the lack of basic education, or having reached the advanced age of 48, 49 or 50 finding that their skill, which in previous years permitted them to work in security until the age of retirement, has suddenly become obsolete or redundant and they find themselves a statistic among the unemployed. I think the change will do much to remove the unintentional discrimination that has been directed toward women in the work force. The three year work rule made it extremely difficult for the department to help upgrade a widow or a woman who, for one reason or another, must return to work to support her children, a chronically ill husband or someone else in her family by providing such simple courses as shorthand, typing, dictation and other work of this nature. It is this type of case of which members are aware, and on which they have made representations at one time or another.

We have suggested in the bill a little more flexibility in the training allowance that will be provided to certain categories of Canadians. We are now trying to bring into manpower training a single individual with absolutely no financial responsibilities, usually a youngster who is living at home and has little or no financial obligation due to the fact he is living at home and has understanding parents. I approve of the suggestion of the department that we provide a little more flexibility, which in some cases will mean less in the way of a training allowance, so that we can provide more in the way of a training allowance to other cases, depending on the particular circumstances of the individual and his or her family.

• (1230)

There are other changes proposed in the bill, changes which are, I believe, in the final analysis, of equal importance. In time they may become more important. I draw the attention of hon. members to the impediment in the existing legislation which makes it impossible to provide on-the-job training as a permanent feature of the act. Hon. members know that during the winter months when we were faced with unusually high unemployment the provinces extended the fullest co-operation after a series of meetings held perhaps too late in the season. Anyway, they were held. Many rules, regulations and acts were bypassed or dispensed with by the provinces; things were permitted, because of the needs of the situation, which otherwise might not have been permitted.

One of the areas concerned was on-the-job training. The original sum of money provided for this program, \$20 million, was immediately seized upon by employers. Many people were provided with work training on the job at a pace which is pleasantly surprising. Consequently, the sum of money available was increased to \$50 million, all of which has been allocated. This does not necessarily mean that it will all be spent, but it is all intended to be spent. If there is any pick-up it will probably be because some employers are unable to live up to their commitments—they may have been over anxious, thinking in terms of hiring 10 or 12 people when their capacity for training can accommodate only six or seven. In general,

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though, it can be accepted by the House that all of the \$50 million allocated to this program has been absorbed.

It has always been my intention and my belief, even when I was Minister of Labour and fairly close to the same people, that more emphasis must be placed in future on on-the-job training.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Mackasey: The question of what would be best for the working force of the country is a subject which has been debated in this House in a fairly non-partisan way on many occasions. It has been very upsetting to all of us, no matter where we sit, to find large blocks of workers being laid off as an almost daily occurrence, and their skills made obsolete because they have been replaced by machines. It is obvious that many of these people, with their basic skills and sense of responsibility, could be trained on the job to man the new machines which so often pose a problem for all concerned in this technological age when what were formerly labour-intensive industries are becoming capital intensive. The act did not permit the department to enter into proper on-the-job training programs; the amendments proposed would make this possible in the future. They will also make it possible for the department to enter into contracts with groups of employers.

I will cite one example of what I have in mind; it has particular application to the Halifax, Saint John, Montreal, Toronto and Hamilton areas. The waterfronts are becoming automated at an increasingly rapid pace with the advent of containerization. The employers in their wisdom, particularly in the three ports of Montreal, Trois Rivières and Quebec, have, with the co-operation of the unions, initiated a program designed to convert the unskilled longshoreman to the type of individual who can master the automated equipment which is now being installed on the waterfront, such as special trucks, overhead cranes and the other complicated gear needed to handle containers. Longshoremen are acquiring new skills and this has been possible through an enlightened approach on the part of management and labour. This bill, if the amendments are agreed to, will permit the department to enter into contracts with groups of employers rather than with a single employer. The characteristic organization of the waterfront is such that employers are grouped together into associations and their employees are common to them in the same way as construction workers are common, in a pool, to the construction industry. The proposed change would go a long way to accelerating training in industry.

The other change, which is a minor one, is intended to simplify financial arrangements with the provinces. As most hon. members know, the Department of Manpower is a delicate department in the sense that it is sometimes difficult to define the borderline between its responsibilities and the jurisdiction of the provinces. It is a tribute to the officials, both at the federal level and in the provinces, that the department has been able to get along for five months with so little friction developing between the governments. It is obvious, though, that there must be more consultation with the provinces and that increased priority must be given in future to the thrust the provinces