

*Supply—Labour*

and how stringent the legislation should be. I would hope the Woods report would give us some guidance on this.

**Mr. Allmand:** Mr. Chairman, at this time I should like to say a few words about the serious problems faced by middle aged workers when they endeavour to find employment. During the three years I have been in parliament I have learned of many sad cases involving men in their forties and fifties. These were cases of competent experienced men who had much to offer. They wanted to work. Many of them still had young families, but for many reasons they were unable to find employment. As a member of parliament I have endeavoured to help these men. I have spoken to personnel managers whom I know. I have tried to direct them to government jobs. In most cases, however, there seems to be some bar to the employment of men in these age categories.

If this is a serious problem today I maintain it will become much more serious unless some action is taken very shortly because, as many people have pointed out in this era of technological change and automation, many men will change their trade or employment during their lifetime, not once but two or three times. Hon. members who have spoken on the estimates so far have pointed out that men in their thirties, forties and fifties have been out of work after having been employed for many years. In these cases it is necessary for them quite often to develop new skills and look for a new type of work.

In the last few years the manpower retraining and relocation program has been introduced. This is a very good program under which we try to train men so that they will learn new skills, in order that they may fit into other employment. However, I believe all this will be of no avail if we do not do something about the restrictions and bars there seem to be in respect of employment for men in these age categories. The men who are faced with these problems are not only the blue collar workers; they are also the white collar workers, and professional people in all categories, some of whom have held very good positions for 20 or 30 years. Some of the cases I have known have involved men who have had the misfortune of being in hospital for a year or two because of serious illness. Then when they returned to the employment market they could not find anything.

It has been suggested that the solution to this problem might be through an amendment

to the Fair Employment Practices Act by adding discrimination in respect of age to the present categories of discrimination which are mentioned in that act. At present this act prohibits discrimination, I believe, for race, creed, colour and national origin. It has been suggested that discrimination based on age might be added. Some provinces have fair employment practices act, in which this is included as one of the prohibitive classes.

I believe an amendment of this type could be made, but I do not think it is the most effective answer to the problem. It would seem that one of the main reasons given by employers for not hiring men in these age categories is that their pension plans are set up in such a way that they discourage the entry into the pension plan of people at age 40, and more progressively as they become over 40. There may be other reasons. I suggest it might be very worth while for our progressive Minister of Labour to call together the major employers in Canada, trade union leaders and those insurance and trust companies which run these company pension plans. If these people were brought together it might be possible to work out a solution to this problem and, if the pension plan really is the bar, find ways in which something might be done to eliminate this problem.

It could be that perhaps the government, through some type of legislation or incentive program, might be able to help the companies and those administering the pension plans to remove these restrictions in one way or another. I do not know the answer, but I think the answer could be found, and I believe it should be found very quickly. Not only are we losing very productive people from our labour force, and potential taxpayers, but we are also placing men in a position where they must rely on pension plans, relief, unemployment insurance and unemployment assistance. We are setting up a group of very frustrated people. I can testify to this because of the experience I have had in respect of the cases with which I personally have dealt.

I know the Minister of Labour is considering a program of legislation. Perhaps there are other matters which have a higher priority. If we consider the number of matters involved, I suppose there are things with higher priority; but I believe this matter deserves a very high place in his legislative planning. I would hope that next year or as soon as possible he would try to do something about this problem, which is faced by many of our medium aged workers. I might point out also that there are many middle aged