

*Oral Questions*

veys from StatsCan, and in view of the fact that StatsCan, by their own admission, now admit to the inadequacy of labour force surveys based on the hidden jobless—the people who, out of sheer frustration, have given up looking for a job—will the minister now reassess the data that he uses to measure the extent of Manpower training programs and make-work programs?

**Mr. Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, in his preamble, the hon. member has gone into four or five different areas. I have indicated to him that mere registration at a Manpower office does not indicate that an individual is unemployed. Many are looking for better employment, some are looking for jobs that would be easier for them physically, and others feel they are underemployed and would like to know, when jobs come up, that they will be called. So it would be misleading and inappropriate to use the numbers registered at Manpower offices.

I give full marks to StatsCan for trying constantly, through one method or another, to give us accurate statistics. They have indicated to us, and I quote them, that “the most solid and objective measure of the numbers of unemployed is indicated by those without work and who are actively looking for work.” Given those particular statistics, they have a relative basis right across the country, so that no one is left out. As a matter of fact, the hon. member should know that his own province, in Canada works projects, ranks fourth in the gross amount of money that is received. If the hon. member is suggesting that is inappropriate, that cannot be helped by me.

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**MANPOWER****CRITICISM OF GOVERNMENT TRAINING PROGRAMS**

**Mr. Perrin Beatty (Wellington-Grey-Dufferin-Waterloo):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Employment and Immigration: it relates to a report on the training of skilled, blue collar workers prepared for the Department of Employment and Immigration by Robertson, Nickerson Group Associates Limited.

Will the minister tell the House whether he agrees with the report's conclusions that the federal government has failed to supply leadership, that government training programs “need a massive overhaul”, and that “the opportunity for high level young Canadians to get into a skilled trade is so non-existent that this situation can be described as disgraceful”? If the minister does agree with this assessment, can he tell the House what action he proposes to take, as minister, to rectify the situation?

**Hon. Bud Cullen (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** I always feel that individuals who are writing reports and come to a particular conclusion use words that are bound to catch the eye and are bound to be printed. The fact is that we have tripled the amount of money we are making available under the apprenticeship program, just as one indicator.

[Mr. McGrath.]

● (1422)

We have just completed ten agreements, one with each of the provinces, under the Adult Occupational Training Act. The hon. member spoke about federal government programs. With respect, I should like to indicate that education is a field solely within the jurisdiction of the provinces. In fact we are buying places in the provinces for the kind of training they want. I have indicated in the House and in other places that, frankly, I am dissatisfied with the fact, having done a study in southwestern Ontario primarily, that 75 per cent of the high skilled jobs were filled by immigration rather than on the job training. I am trying to encourage industry, through the shifting of funding to industry, to play a larger role in on the job training and to make more funds available to provide that opportunity for the young people in the country. I think it is a better approach than relying on immigration to fill these jobs.

**Mr. Beatty:** Mr. Speaker, the report is eye-catching in its conclusions. It points out the reason such a high percentage of skilled blue collar workers have come to Canada is that it was promoted by the federal government and not by industry because of the lack of skilled labour available for blue collar industrial trades. The report points out that of the 9,300 skilled workers in the study group, only 27 per cent were born in Canada. Does the minister agree with the report's conclusion? It reads in part:

—there is a shortage of upper skilled workers now and it will get more serious as the economy picks up. It does not understate the situation to say that industrial growth in Canada will be inhibited by a lack of skilled workers.

If he agrees with that, can the minister tell the House what specific action he is proposing to take, as the federal Minister of Employment and Immigration, to deal with this situation?

**Mr. Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, I have indicated that substantial additional funding has been made available under apprenticeship programs. Also, I indicated the agreement we have entered into with each of the provinces to see if we can upgrade skills. I have made public the fact that 75 per cent of the highly skilled jobs being filled by immigrants in the manufacturing industry in southwestern Ontario is obviously inappropriate. Because of that, we are weighting our funding and our money into industrial on the job training programs. I think that is an appropriate approach.

However, companies have told us that they spend thousands of dollars in training individuals, only to find that when the training is completed they shop around. They would much prefer to do their recruiting from abroad. We have indicated that we will discourage this. If there are Canadians available—and there are jobs available now and there will be in the future—there will be first-class jobs in the particular skills which will be needed by Canada and I should like to see Canadians fill those posts rather than its being done by immigration. I have brought that point home very clearly to my provincial colleagues—all of whom share my concern, I might say.