

*Employment*

that the provinces, without overlooking their jurisdictions or financial needs, will show a greater interest in the real needs of the workers with regard to training, especially in terms of future requirements, while remembering, however, that when they lend a helping hand professionally, they cannot take all the credit for complete and absolute success. This, indeed, is what Mrs. Lise Bissonnette, in the newspaper *Le Devoir* for January 16, after the Vancouver conference, reminded the Quebec minister of education, Mr. Camille Laurin, and Mr. Robert Dean, parliamentary secretary to the minister of labour, Mr. Marois, saying that in Quebec alone, the trade schools system is a minor scandal: it offers training in 90 super-specialized fields to the young of 14 to 17 years of age.

Mr. Speaker, everyone agrees that the Adult Occupational Training Act, now 15 years old, no longer meets present needs adequately, and even less those of the future when the highest degree of specialized training will be imperative. All levels of government and the private sector must work together to get professional training that is adapted to the new and changing needs of our economy and industry. This sensible and practical approach will also be required of unions and their members. Training in areas with an existing or potential manpower surplus should be stopped or at least substantially reduced.

If we succeed in alleviating manpower shortages, especially in highly skilled jobs, we will then be able to stimulate the economy, improve our competitive position on international markets, reduce inflationary pressures and provide Canadians with training and retraining opportunities that will help them get interesting and well-paid jobs generated by our country's economic recovery. I should like to point out that the regions will also benefit by this policy. I am saying this because some unwitting proponents of "balkanization" would actually deny some of their fellow citizens' higher education because they are afraid they would then move to one of the other provinces to work.

The long night of the Duplessis year is history, but in 1982 there are still people who are saying, substantially, that training is okay, but not too much, if they are going to use that training somewhere else. Are we going to prevent Quebec workers from retraining for another job, just because they might get a better job in another town or province? And what if Quebec's own requirements may soon oblige us to seek elsewhere the workers we failed to train in this province?

Mr. Speaker, I feel that with respect to occupational training, the financial incentives given employers under the training in industry program should be modified in order to simplify the assistance framework, accelerate training in occupations where there is a shortage of skilled manpower and encourage training and retraining of women in occupations traditionally held by men and also training and retraining of special needs clients, such as native peoples and the handicapped. I believe that such developments will be very important in the years to come.

• (2010)

[*English*]

**Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands):** Mr. Speaker, the subject matter we are dealing with in today's debate is the federal government's deliberate failure to create job opportunities for the hundreds of thousands of Canadians now looking for work and, in addition to them, the thousands who will be entering the work force in the coming months and years. Nothing could be more pertinent to the responsibilities we hold as Members of Parliament than that we should do something to alleviate the terrible suffering and the waste of human potential that unemployment is inflicting upon the Canadian society today.

Seldom in our history have we seen such devastating circumstances as those that confront us now. When we look at the figures, they tell a very difficult story. As of January 8, the last date for which the figures were available, the seasonally adjusted unemployment level in Canada was estimated at 1,026,000 persons, or over one million Canadians out of work.

That figure does not include hidden unemployed, the many people who have given up in despair and are no longer in the labour force. After months and years of looking for work, some of them have just had to give up. It does not include those who have abandoned hope, who have given in to despair that they will not be able to find jobs. If this figure of the hidden unemployed were to be included, it would make the figure much higher than the one million that we have in public knowledge today. It could, it has been estimated, raise that figure tragically to something like one and a half million Canadians unemployed.

Today when we turned on our radios and read our newspapers, we were advised of a report that had been done for the federal Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce which predicts that another 175,000 Canadians will be out of work by March, and that many more in the next two months. It will primarily affect the manufacturing sectors of the provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

If you turned on your radio or read your paper and saw that in this morning's news and you happen to be a person employed in the manufacturing sector of these two provinces, what would your reaction be? I am sure it would be the same for people all across this country as it is for those who work in the manufacturing sector of these two provinces.

They know their security is threatened, their future shadowed by uncertainty. The anxiety and gloom which accompanies that must be present in all of their thinking. Thousands are probably asking themselves whether they will be the next to be laid off. They wonder, if it happens to them, how they will go about meeting their mortgage payments and providing a decent living for their family, and where they will find another job. This is what thousands of Canadians are asking themselves tonight because they live in uncertainty and insecurity in the job market in Canada today.

Faced with this kind of uncertainty, who can blame them if in the weeks and months ahead their productivity drops or they