

*Manpower Retraining Programs*

ty. Having said that we greet the general principles warmly, I must say that if one compares what the minister said today with the results of past programs he will realize the tremendous distance we must cover in the next year or two to implement the things about which the minister spoke.

We welcome the announcement of the minister that training allowances will be paid by the government to people taking training and that this will in no way jeopardize unemployment insurance benefit. We also welcome the announcement that one hundred per cent of bills for retraining of students will be paid by the government. This is precisely what I suggested during an earlier debate in relation to tax arrangements, namely that the federal government should accept its responsibilities to help those people who come from or live in "have not" provinces.

• (5:40 p.m.)

I am sure it is evident that we have come a long way since 1967 and that the training program is doing a good job for persons who need occupational training. The so-called task force of October, 1968, was really a meeting of representatives from the field offices with headquarters staff of the programs branch, manpower division, to review their experience with the operation of the Canada Manpower training program and recommend improvements in procedures and regulations. I am sure members realize that it is good business practice to obtain the views of those responsible for delivering services to the public in all parts of the country.

Regional representatives attending the 1968 meeting in Ottawa came from Halifax, Montreal, Toronto, Winnipeg and Vancouver. From this gathering of experienced men we were able to gain much and to improve the program in many ways. The representatives at these meetings were certainly aware of the 52-week limit on training but did not recommend an extension; then simply recognized that the courses were limited to 52 weeks by the legislation. During the fiscal year 1969-70, 300,332 Canadians benefited from the various training courses offered by the program. This would seem to indicate that the 52-week limit does not seriously affect individuals wishing to acquire new skills.

Under the Adult Occupational Training Act the department purchases training services, primarily from provincial schools but also from private training institutions and from industry. It works closely with provincial authorities and educators in developing and putting into effect training courses suited to the needs of the labour market. During 1969-70 the department purchased more than 15 million training days at a cost of \$115 million. The total expenditures for training during 1969-70 were nearly \$250 million, compared to \$190 million during 1968-69 and \$105 million during 1967-68.

The types of training offered by the Canada Manpower training program include upgrading courses, the acquisition of new skills, language training for immigrants, apprenticeship and training in industry. To qualify for training, workers must be one year older than the school-leaving age in their province of residence and must not have attended school on a regular basis during the previous 12 months. Full-time trainees who have been members of the labour force for a three-year period, or those who have one or more dependants as described in the adult occupational training regulations, qualify for training allowances.

[Mr. Turner (London East).]

Manpower training is an increasingly important and effective tool of national economic policy. It improves the efficiency of the labour market by providing suitable people to fill vacancies promptly. It provides industry with needed skilled workers and it enables Canadians to adjust to economic change and take advantage of emerging employment opportunities throughout Canada. It spurs economic growth and productivity. In times of heavy unemployment such as we have been experiencing, the program is particularly effective since by training idle workers production is not lost and the training allowances usually replace other forms of transfer payments; workers trained in such slack periods form a pool of skilled workers who serve as an essential base and springboard for the next wave of economic expansion. Because many adults lack the basic preparation for entry to skilled training it is necessary to provide upgrading in key academic subjects such as mathematics, science, reading and communicative skills. However, formal, full academic courses are not purchased under the program.

Some of those who feel the 52-week limit should be increased are of the opinion that the federal government should take over the provincial responsibility for education and provide workers with regular secondary school education. They forget that the Canada Manpower training program is an economic measure designed to meet the needs of the labour market. It was never intended that the program would take over education and provide regular school courses.

Apprentice training is an important part of the training program, providing support for the classroom portion of apprentice training programs operated by the provinces. Language training is provided for immigrants who cannot find employment or make reasonable use of their skills because they cannot communicate in English or French.

As an incentive to industry to establish training programs for their workers, to provide broader, more transferable training and encourage industry to hire unemployed workers, the Canada Manpower training program provides support to training-in-industry programs. All the types of occupational training I have mentioned are limited to a duration of 52 weeks. It is only in the area of basic training for skill development that there seems to be a demand for training of longer duration. This is because people generally want the program to provide regular academic subjects for which, of course, the program is not designed.

It has been the experience in some provinces that by using modern methods of training, a great number of grade levels in mathematics, science and communication skills can be covered in a 52-week period. The majority of skill courses require a grade ten level education for admission and it seems that the vast majority of those who are referred to basic training for skill development are able to reach the required level within the 52-week limit. They then proceed to skill courses where they may receive a further 52 weeks of training.

The time limit on training was, of course, covered in the discussions as were all other aspects of the program. However, the purpose of the meetings was not to make decisions but to make recommendations for the consideration of management. As a result of the meetings a number of suggestions were made and put into effect.