

*National Training Act*

roles in virtually all industrial settings. Of course, this allows greater flexibility for the employers, greater leeway in planning and reacting to changing economic conditions, but it also allows greater flexibility to the individuals holding those jobs. I believe this sort of extended and detailed training could attract a growing number of young people as they begin to realize the skills to be gathered would be very comprehensive. Their vocational training would, and I believe should, regain respectability.

In looking at Bill C-115, we find that the emphasis is to upgrade special technological trainees. One of my questions in terms of context is still outstanding. The bill does not state where or how it will fit into the government's economic policies, only that it will "provide occupational training for the labour force and thereby to better meet the need for skills created by a changing economy and to increase the earning and employment potential of individual workers".

Essentially, as I see it, when we are dealing with this type of bill we must be able to relate it to a particular recovery plan. That is particularly true when we are dealing with the current situation in Canada where we have a national recession and record unemployment. Among those unemployed people are many with high levels of skill. What types of occupations of national importance are likely to be defined as such in a period like this? This bill must be attached to a plan or a strategy for the rejuvenation of the economy. Failing that, if there is not a general plan, then let us at least have some sort of sectoral stimulus. Something should be done to relate this bill to the jobs and the situation we now face.

My concern is that graduates of any vocational plan will find it difficult to find work. For us, that presents a whole new danger, because young people are investing much time and effort to improve their skills and gain these new opportunities, and then suddenly finding themselves dumped on the world market with no jobs or opportunity. What will happen to them? They will become angry or frustrated because their hopes, dreams and years of hard work will be destroyed before they even have a chance to start. We could end up spending much money on training centres and equipment which will be soon outdated unless, of course, we use it for teaching theory. We need a strong industry committed to supporting this kind of training, one that will teach and provide us with the practical expression and practical application of those skills.

The province of Alberta is probably a special case. It is not very long ago that this type of bill could have helped that province a great deal because unemployment was low and we needed a number of skilled workers. Unfortunately, if one looks at what has happened to the unemployment figures in our province today, one finds that we have a surplus of skilled workers. In Canada there are 1,241,000 recorded unemployed, or 10.2 per cent of the work force. In Alberta, it is about 7.2 per cent, which is up considerably from just last month. In Edmonton it is up again, at 8.2 per cent, and in Calgary it is 7.2 per cent. If one looks at the region I represent, one will find that unemployment has tripled in less than one year. Who is hurting? Who is losing these jobs? It is our young men who

are facing 20 per cent unemployment and our young women who make up 14.7 per cent of those unemployed. We are at an all-time post-depression high for unemployment.

Even our so-called whiz kids, those who are especially bright and talented, are having a hard time, like my colleague from the maritimes. Two cases were recently reported in one of our local papers of young people who had received the gold medal of excellence. One was in the field of chemistry. Today those two gold medal winners cannot find jobs. It is not just the person with low skills or at the lower end of the employment opportunities who suffers from unemployment. It is coming through the whole gamut of those who are seeking employment.

• (1630)

As I mentioned, in our area we are facing increased unemployment. The Peace River tar sands project which we talked about in this House, and which the chambers and municipalities in that area have been desperately trying to get reactivated and are speaking to the federal government about, would allow the young people in that region a much greater opportunity as well as all young people in Canada. The economic spin-off of a \$5 billion tar sands plant would be felt here in Ontario. Without that tar sands project there will be an even greater problem to be faced in that area. We need assurance from this government that that project, which would provide us with so many opportunities, will not be allowed to die.

I want to close by saying that this bill should and must be tied to an economic recovery program. The minister told us that the old program trains people for jobs that do not exist. Unless this bill is attached to an economic recovery program, we will be faced with precisely the same situation. Unless we can tie it all together and provide people with training that will allow them to take jobs that are available when they complete their training, we are defeating the whole purpose and we will be back to where we started.

**Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East):** Mr. Speaker, in May, 1980, this House appointed a parliamentary task force to deal with the entire subject matter of this bill. I, along with six others, had the pleasure of being on that task force for employment opportunities for the eighties. The task force included four government members, two from the Official Opposition and one from the New Democratic Party.

For over a year and a half we studied this entire problem. During that time we heard from 342 groups and associations throughout this country. They had important input into this matter. They appeared before the committee. We questioned them to get their views. We received 92 other briefs dealing with the subject matter.

Our mandate was to find out why in this country we had serious unemployment side by side with important skill shortages. This was not only taking place in the country as a whole but in individual communities. In communities where there