

[Translation]

Mr. Roland Godin (Portneuf): Mr. Speaker, I am happy to congratulate the minister who is sponsoring Bill C-195, to amend the Adult Occupational Act, now before us.

The continuance and improvement of this program is a laudable initiative, and I rejoice at the thought that from now on the three-year period which in the past was required before people could become eligible for an occupational training course will be reduced to one year.

I imagine that of all hon. members who have no income other than their parliamentary allowance, not one could afford to wait for three years before getting paid.

However, this is more or less what we used to ask of young people under the previous act. We used to ask them to wait for three years before they could qualify and become eligible to receive a few cents, just enough to survive until they got a job.

Although our general education system has been improved, it is obvious that all young people still cannot aim for a profession. The chance to study big books and to attend places of higher learning regularly is not given to everybody, and this bill is designed to assist all other people who still have skills.

In this life, we need good lawyers, good doctors, good accountants, but we also need butchers, bakers, carpenters, and electricians. In other words, we need a very large team which, though it may not seem so, is very important—a team of people who accomplish tasks which are indispensable to the smooth running of our society.

Although this bill appears on the whole to be very effective, it should not lead us to believe that every problem will be immediately solved. We are getting ready, we are making plans and we want to help young people and persons of all ages to retrain and be prepared to perform new tasks, but after reviewing the events that took place in our country these last few years, I am asking the following question: Will the minister's appropriations be as great as his intended generosity?

My question relates to the fact that I know some people in my riding who have actually qualified for training courses, who have attended them for a certain period of time and, suddenly, have been forced to wait another year before resuming the second part of these two-year courses. When these people complained to the Manpower Centre or to the Quebec office, they were repeatedly told for a week that this delay was due to lack of facilities and space. The following week, these same persons called up other officials of the manpower centre and, this time, they were given another explanation to the effect that the interruption of the courses was primarily due to lack of funds, the budget having been exceeded. I think that this explanation has worn thin, Mr. Speaker.

Other ministers have proposed other programs; municipalities and citizens groups have also submitted projects to the government and it often happens that they are rejected due to lack of money.

The Opportunities for Youth program has come back this year amidst an unprecedented publicity campaign and we know that of the 19,000 projects that are submitted, the minister will only retain 3,000 and reject the remaining 16,000 because of lack of funds.

Adult Occupational Training Act

Today, the minister is brimming with good intentions; he has come to us with a clear and definite bill. But how will it be implemented? With regard to the Opportunities for Youth program, one project out of six only was approved, on the average. Therefore, can the minister assure the House that everyone that qualifies under the act will be accepted? Will the minister have to deal with the same problems as his colleagues who introduced the Local Initiative Program and the Opportunities for Youth program? Is the bill before us, Mr. Speaker, going to be accepted throughout the country, for all provinces and all regions of this country? Or will this legislation only apply to some special, designated, Liberal, Social Credit, or Conservative areas? One may ask all those questions, Mr. Speaker, as a result of the way legislation is accepted in this country at the present time, and applied in several fields. Unhappily, such situation occurs on too many occasions. Now, there is a provision of this bill which really makes me laugh, that is section 6, page 2, which reads as follows:

• (1440)

(1) The Minister may enter into a contract with

(a) any employer operating or undertaking to operate an occupational training course for the training of adults employed by the employer, or

(b) a group or association of such employers,

to provide for the payment by the Minister to that employer, group or association, as the case may be, of the costs incurred, as specified in the contract, by the employer, group or association in providing such training.

(2) The Minister may enter into a contract with

(a) any employer who has arranged for the training of adults employed by him in an occupational training course that is not operated by the employer, or

(b) any group or association of such employers,

to provide for the payment to that employer, group or association, as the case may be, of the costs incurred, as specified in the contract, by the employer, group or association in providing such training.

Despite the clear wording of the legislation, I wonder whether employers will take this provision seriously, after the bad experience they underwent last winter. And I will take the liberty, at this stage, to quote a letter which I received on March 24, 1972:

I quote:

Mr. Roland Godin,
M. P. for Portneuf,
Parliament Building, Ottawa.

Dear Sir:

Following the outcome of my request for training and employment to the manpower centre, I submit my opinion to you uncritically, as you will certainly and very shortly be able to convey it to the people, departments, members of Parliament or officials who will be able to act on it.

I submitted a request for training pursuant to the requirements of the manpower centre, which consisted in a program based on twelve months of training and liable to result in about 55 per cent of the performance necessary for the candidate to continue his job. Without giving up the basic purpose of my proposal, I accepted, having no other alternative, the eight weeks that I was offered, in view of my employee requirements to be able to expand my business.

I infer from this that the federal government or the manpower centre is really working to create jobs, but if I consider the outcome of my proposal, I wonder whether securing continuing