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the origin of by far the largest number of immigrants when compared with others.

Mr. Masters: Mr. Chairman, I would like to thank the minister for his sensitive assistance in the many special immigration cases which have occurred in my riding and which have required ministerial understanding. I say the same thing to the officials with whom I have come into contact. Because of the nature of the community and because it is an international port, Thunder Bay is a place where there are many immigration situations which require special study and understanding. This has always been received.

Tonight I would like to speak as a parent and a long-time observer of the Canadian scene. I would like to speak about one of the most challenging problems facing our nation today, the upgrading of our labour force. However, before looking at the present situation and what may lie ahead for Canadians, I believe it would be useful to have a historical perspective of training.

Technical and vocational education in Canada today is the product of evolution. Our early settlers learned by watching and practising, and during the nineteenth century such practical instruction became formalized as it was embodied in the school curriculum.

Federal government involvement in the field of education began with the proclamation of the Agricultural Aid Act in 1912 followed by the Agricultural Instruction Act in 1913. There have been various federal acts and agreements made under their authority since then except for the period 1929 through to 1937.

The federal government has played an increasingly important role in this field, particularly since the passing of the Technical Education Act of 1919 which clearly defined the responsibilities of the provinces and the federal government and stipulated that the federal government would share up to 50 per cent of the provincial expenditures for technical education. The federal involvement was justified on the basis of the need of an industrial nation for an adequate supply of skilled workers, provision of equality of education opportunity and the high cost to local and provincial authorities of providing adequate training programs and facilities.

It is interesting to note that in 1919 the federal government's contribution to technical education was \$700,000 compared with its contribution of \$800 million to adult occupational training in 1980-81.

The Adult Occupational Training Act of 1967 marked a significant new departure for Canada. It clearly separated the occupational training of adults from the education of the young. The then newly-established department of manpower and immigration was given responsibility for implementing the provisions of the act through the Canada Manpower Training Program. This act allowed the federal government to purchase training services from the provinces and private schools on behalf of its adult workers and to enter into contracts with employers. A striking feature of the act was its linking of occupational training for adults with the needs and opportuni-

ties of the labour market. The federal and provincial governments co-operate to determine training needs and develop training plans. Budget and guidelines are set nationally but focus on local needs and conditions.

In 1972 the act was amended significantly to increase its flexibility. The program was made available to more adults, some of the restrictions on the provision of industrial training were lifted and certain sections which were no longer relevant were repealed.

While it is very easy to sit back and criticize the training carried out under the act, the fact of the matter is that there are hundreds of thousands of Canadians who have benefited from the program. Without it many of them would not have had the opportunity to learn skills or to improve their skills.

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As in any program, there is always room for improvement. At the present time, two task forces are studying it, and their recommendations may have a great influence on the future direction of training in Canada. They are the parliamentary task force on critical skills for the eighties, headed by the hon. member for Notre-Dame-de-Grâce (Mr. Allmand), and a high level task force reporting to the chairman of Employment and Immigration Canada, which will work to develop a comprehensive employment strategy for the eighties. As a result of these studies, there will, no doubt, be proposals made to increase the effectiveness of the training program.

For many years I have had an interest in the way in which young Canadians are prepared for their careers. That interest has increased since I became a member of Parliament and have had the opportunity to discuss with other hon. members the relationship between education and employment across the country.

It is my opinion, and I am sure that many other hon. members will agree, that we have not always been doing a good job of preparing students for the labour market. Not only have we failed in many instances to give students the technical skills that the jobs of the future will require, we have also failed to provide them with an elementary understanding of the world of work and the ways in which working life is different from the lives they have so far known—family life and school life. We have not told students about the jobs of the future and we have not found ways to give them the hands-on experience that will reveal their strengths and weaknesses, their likes and dislikes, and what in general they can expect of work.

Too many students are making decisions about their education and the career they hope to pursue without adequate information and without much thought. Too many students are graduating without any thought to the labour market and the places in that market where they may find a niche. I have heard estimates that one-third of our graduating students cannot say what occupations they would like to follow. I suspect that there is another third of our graduating students who, although they can say what jobs they would like, have only the most elementary knowledge of the world of work.