

Manpower and Immigration Council

speeches which have been made across the country by the minister and his departmental officials about the importance of manpower training, it seems incredible to me that instead of expanding the program it is being curtailed. Indeed, Mr. Chairman, I think it is fair to say that the program is being strangled.

It seems to me that perhaps this new Advisory council will be able to provide some of the answers that we have not been able to get from the minister. We need to know whether the government has decided that the recommendations made by the Economic Council with regard to the retraining program and the upgrading of skills in the labour force of Canada are unacceptable and it is therefore cutting back, whether the minister now finds that the government does not have the money to pay for the large number of Canadian workers who are willing to take courses to upgrade their skills, or whether what we have is a bureaucratic morass under which the job simply cannot be done.

My colleague from Greenwood will be discussing the question of immigrants so I am not going into detail on the problem of immigration. However, I should like to repeat what I have said on other occasions. We in this party believe in an aggressive immigration policy. The party to which I belong agrees with a policy which brings more immigrants to this country every year who speak other than English or French. We have been following a policy of encouraging the coming to Canada of more people from Italy, Portugal and Greece each year, and I approve of that policy.

In light of all the advices given us to the effect that a working force which is not well trained will be unable to do the jobs required of it in coming years, surely we should be expanding our training facilities for new immigrants who wish to learn English. If I may refer to the situation in Toronto specifically, the Toronto board of education has a program called "Special English For New Canadians", but it is obvious that rather than expanding the program we are killing it.

Let me close by putting on the record some figures relative to what is happening. In February of this year there were 2,300 people taking the course, "Special English For New Canadians", which is held in Toronto. In March there were 2,290 people taking the course, in April 2,270, in May 2,060, in June 1,700, in July 1,479, and in August there were only 1,137 people taking the course.

Surely, Mr. Chairman, the minister and his departmental officials will agree that if we are to encourage people whose native tongue is not English to come to Canada it is elementary that every single one of them should be persuaded to attend either day school or night school to learn English, or to learn French if they are living in the province of Quebec, and to learn the language as quickly as possible.

• (4:50 p.m.)

The figures I have given for Toronto could be duplicated for Montreal, Ottawa or Vancouver and show precisely the same situation.

Before I sit down may I say that since provincial departments of education have not been able to obtain the answers to these questions which are of utmost importance to the people of Canada and to the manpower needs of this country in the years to come, the advisory committees which the minister proposes to appoint should be enabled to obtain those answers which this country deserves to have.

[Translation]

Mr. Laprise: Mr. Chairman, my remarks will be very brief at this time; as the bill is not available and the government policy is not clearly known yet, it is rather difficult at this point to dwell at length on the matter.

In any case, it seems to me that this bill is concerned mainly with the manpower problem in Canada, rather than immigration, although in my estimation both are rather closely related.

I think that a Canadian manpower council should be set up, as this is a relatively new area of concern for the Canadian government, and this is due, I think, to the technological explosion occurring not only in this country but throughout the world.

I think that if the council is asked to advise the government instead of being told by the latter what recommendations to make, it would be more effective because the government seems, by itself, unable to find the proper means of meeting the requirements of manpower relocation arising from the technical development of our industries.

And here I should like to urge the minister to invite the industry to participate as closely as possible in the manpower training program, not only by providing advice or facilities, but from a financial point of view. I think that industries, especially major industries, should have funds available for such a