

Supply

Canada Manpower Centres by employers. Those references resulted in placements by Canada Manpower Centres on behalf of employers of just under 1 million people; 998,593 to be fairly exact. That represents a 25 per cent increase over the previous year. That does not include short-term placements where jobs are of a duration of one week or less, casual employment, which amount to another 300,000 annually.

I do not suggest that this represents any degree of perfection or in fact a performance with which Manpower officials, the minister or a succession of ministers should be satisfied. However, I think it refutes the argument that we should severely handicap the Manpower department by reducing this vote to \$1. This would be a serious reaction to what is obviously an improving performance. This department is on the way up. In almost every area I have been able to examine, it is showing an increasingly efficient operation. There is no doubt about it. The figures I have given indicate that employers are beginning to have greater confidence in Manpower offices across the country. This is reflected in the number of referrals which has increased so dramatically.

With regard to co-operation between the Unemployment Insurance Commission and the Canada Manpower Centres, there should be a very deep study and analysis before we can seriously consider a formal merger. There is an examination that is now taking place. In the meantime, there is a very definite program of co-operation between existing Manpower Centres and unemployment insurance offices across the country. In some 144 Manpower offices where there is no Unemployment Insurance Commission office located in the same community, they are taking on the responsibility of providing accommodation to unemployment insurance people. Therefore, there is an extension of the unemployment insurance operation. At the same time, there is full co-operation between the two agencies.

The unemployment insurance benefit control officers were referred to, in a context of the Manpower area, so I think I am entitled to respond that they are not operating as the hon. member said. I would hate to think of them being given the designation, connotation or image of a police system. They have a difficult job to perform. I am concerned that they perform it with understanding of human frailties and with compassion. They are instructed to always give the benefit of the doubt to the claimant with whom they are dealing. Nevertheless, to protect that whole scheme, to keep confidence in it and give it credibility, we have to prove to Canadians generally that people who are getting unemployment insurance are in fact entitled to it.

The benefit control operation is not designed to take people off the rolls and not get them a job. In the ordinary process, people receiving unemployment insurance have to indicate that they are registered with the Canada Manpower Centre. If they have been referred to some kind of job vacancy by Manpower which they have refused to accept, there is an assessment of the situation. If the job vacancy was anywhere decent, in close relationship to the primary or secondary skills of the individual and the conditions of work were reasonably acceptable, we think the claimant should have given consideration to accepting

[Mr. Andras.]

that job. That is the role of the benefit control officer working in conjunction with the Canada Manpower people. I think it is totally reasonable to say to a claimant who is agreeing to the conditions of the Unemployment Insurance Act to actively search for work while he is enjoying the benefits, that if he is referred by the Canada Manpower Centre to a reasonable job he will seriously consider taking it. It is also reasonable that he give us an indication that he is not totally dependent on the Canada Manpower Centre.

Although the Canada Manpower Centre is fast becoming the primary reference of employers, to wit the number of vacancies I referred to a moment ago, we do not claim nor do we think it ever will contain all the references under its wing of all job vacancies existing in Canada. As an aside, I might say that we recognize the existence of private placement agencies, and the requirement, indeed the desire and the right of individuals to seek jobs on their own. We think this should be maintained, otherwise we would have to go to a totally controlled state where the government tells each individual what he can think, should think, can do or cannot do. But, I do not think it is unreasonable to ask the claimant who is getting the benefit of unemployment insurance payments to also search beyond the Manpower offices. In fact, the indications are that it is performing.

• (1540)

This particular vote refers to administration of training. It is an interesting coincidence that tomorrow, at the request of the Council of Education Ministers from the provinces across the country—including the western provinces, I might point out—I, along with the Secretary of State and one or two other ministers will be meeting with provincial ministers of education, and the thrust of one of their recommendations is that the funds available for adult retraining be increased. This is the very vote which is being attacked by hon. members across the way. The gist of provincial speeches is that they would like more money, not less, yet the effect of the hon. member's motion would be to wipe out the \$11 million we need altogether with the exception, of course, of one dollar which would not even pay the postage to enable us to tell the provinces the news of the great disappointment they would suffer if that took place.

What we are dealing with now, this particular training, is the institutional side of the program. On-the-job training is very important as well, of course. We are in the process of comparing the value and the effectiveness of industrial training as opposed to institutional training. Many of the provinces are expressing some concern; they feel that industrial training, which is only in its second year, may signal the beginning of a reduction in the funds available to institutions. We think there is room for both. We believe there is a necessity for both.

The hon. member for Timiskaming drew attention a few minutes ago to the impracticality of aspects of our training of a few years ago in terms of instructing students in the use of heavy equipment for instance. Well, I do not think they could learn to drive a 40-ton truck or a big crane or a big mechanical shovel in a community college. And God forbid that the community colleges would start buying those trucks and that kind of equipment simply to