

Unemployment Insurance Act

I would suggest, as figures do indicate, that there are very few people in this country today who like to be on unemployment insurance. The majority of people want to get out there and work. I know that in the region I come from, they want to work 12 months of the year if they can. Unfortunately, it is not available to them in a lot of cases.

Mr. Kempling: Mr. Speaker, I say to the Hon. Member from Hillsborough that on Prince Edward Island today, the following jobs are available: biotechnology technologist; electro-mechanical technician; early childhood worker; licensed nursing assistant; resident care worker; dental hygienist; executive chef; hog farm worker; dairy farm worker; officer—fishing vessel over 40 tonnes; silviculture worker; machine tool set-up operator; machinist; truck body and trailer builder; industrial sewing machine operator; fibreglass laminator; automotive diagnostic technician; millwright; brick layer; tile setter; reinforcing iron worker; marine deck officer; marine engineer; typesetter; offset press operator; and stationery engineer. I would be pleased to give the Hon. Member a copy of it.

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to respond to the Member from Hillsborough. I will follow up on what the Parliamentary Secretary just mentioned.

Currently in Canada, 55 per cent of all jobs require 12 years or less of education. We are going to find that that is going to change. They are telling us that between 1986 and the year 2000, it is projected that 64 per cent of all the work force will require more than 12 years of education and training.

What that tells us is that we must adjust to the future. That is what this program is doing. It will educate Canadians and upgrade their skills so that they will be able to meet the demands of the future.

To follow this through, I want to point out a couple of very interesting statistics. The number of people trained under the UI program presently is in the vicinity of 75,000, or about 2.5 per cent of all people on UI. We are going to approximately double it to a number in the vicinity of 140,000.

Our goal is very simple. We are going to give those people that are unemployed the skills to get out there and find a job in a very competitive workplace. Times have changed. They are changing very quickly.

Part and parcel of this unemployment insurance program Bill is the training necessary to put people out there in the workplace to meet the demands of the 20th century. That is exactly what we are going to do.

Mr. Proud: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague. I have no problem with training programs. I am a great promoter of apprenticeship programs and programs in the high-tech industry. The problem I have with it, and he certainly knows as well as I, are the problems we face in Atlantic Canada.

One of the big problems I have is the Government getting out of funding the program and the private sector business and employees funding it. The employee who is working in a fish plant will be paying for training for someone who will have to move to a job somewhere else in Canada. If regional development programs are put in place, that will enable those industries to provide the full-time and high-tech jobs that we are looking for.

• (1720)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions and comments are now terminated. On debate, the Hon. Member for Fredericton.

Mr. J. W. Bud Bird (Fredericton): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to participate in this debate and to address myself to the benefits these changes to the Unemployment Insurance Act will bring to Atlantic Canada.

Since 1984 the Government to which I now belong has helped to engineer fundamental changes in the economies of the Atlantic Provinces. We have co-operated with business, industry and labour in creating employment programs and services that reach those workers most in need and those which yield the best long-term results. The Government has shown leadership in helping Atlantic Canadians prepare for the labour market of the future.

It is irrefutable that in the world we now live in people derive economic growth through brain power and skill power. Our future growth will depend increasingly on a highly skilled, flexible labour force.

In 1985 the Government radically changed the approach to employment programs. We replaced the mish-mash of more than 40 ineffective programs with a co-ordinated regionally driven initiative called the Cana-