

*Supply*

general context. It is true that youth unemployment is excessively high, but perhaps it would also be useful to make a distinction between the percentage due to the economic situation and the percentage due to the very nature of youth unemployment. I may point out that in a study it was shown that between 1976 and 1979, youth unemployment averaged 13.7 per cent, while during the same period, the percentage was 7.2 for adult women and 4.7 for adult men. Furthermore, the turnover rate was 5.9 per cent for young people, but 3 per cent for adult women and 1.8 per cent for adult men. What I am trying to say, Mr. Speaker, is that, although youth unemployment today is twice the rate observed among the labour force in general, this is, in fact, merely a continuation of a trend that was observed earlier and is an indication of the specific labour market adjustment problems found among young people. Not only that, Mr. Speaker, but the same report by the Dodge task force pointed out that 50 per cent of youth unemployment was concentrated among 10 per cent of the youth labour force. In other words, 10 per cent of this population, because of the difficulty they experienced in finding work or adjusting to the labour market environment, represented 50 per cent of the total number of unemployed youth. We have no reason to believe that the situation has changed much today, because the percentages were averaged over five years. And furthermore, when these young people succeeded in finding a job, in 90 per cent of the cases they lost it after a few months.

• (1650)

Now, what conclusions should be drawn from these few statistics I have just given you, Mr. Speaker? I can see two. First of all, in today's debate, we must, and I have said this before, see these things in their general context, and second, young people are experiencing unemployment and they are being adversely affected by the economic situation, but also by structural problems, namely, the labour market adjustment problems of young people. Consequently, it is imperative that we take this opportunity to find ways of taking corrective action and to seek appropriate solutions to help young people with specific learning problems to enter the labour market. The previous speaker mentioned there were not enough jobs in Canada. That is true but, paradoxically, we have a shortage of skilled manpower, a problem that was already identified in the report by the Special Committee on Employment Opportunities for the '80s. In the House, much has been said, and much more will be said about training, since last Friday the minister tabled Bill C-115, the purpose of which reads as follows, and I quote Section 3:

3. The purpose of this act is to establish a national program to provide occupational training for the labour force and thereby to better meet the need for skills created by a changing economy and to increase the earning and employment potential of individual workers.

I referred just now to the Dodge report, which had ordered a study made in Ontario. It said that out of a sample group of 100 businesses—the study was prepared by the Ontario Ministry of Colleges and Universities—61 per cent of the

firms had in-house training programs. The firms in question indicated they had no trouble recruiting employees and also that their training programs paid for themselves, because they filled the firm's requirements for skilled manpower. However, of the remaining group of firms included in the study, 84 per cent indicated they had trouble recruiting skilled manpower, 61 per cent indicated they had trouble recruiting employees and finally, they indicated that the only reason why they had no training program was that they did not have the financial resources to do so. In addition, they indicated that they would agree to establish such programs if government assistance were provided. The obvious conclusion is that if the government were to shift the emphasis from its institutional training program, which has been a spending priority to date, to business—as we have started to do, for instance, in the micro-electronic sector, and as will probably be done once Bill C-115 has gone through the legislative mill—it would probably be much easier to deal with the labour market entry and adjustment problems experienced by young people who lack the required skills, instead of resorting to direct job-creation programs which are temporary by nature, although certainly useful in the present economic situation, since they provide summer jobs at least for tens of thousands of young people.

In conclusion, we have, on the one hand, a structural breakdown of youth unemployment, and on the other, a functional breakdown of the situation among business firms, namely, the firm that does provide courses or on-the-job training opportunities and the firm that does not. On the one hand, we have a group of young people—the exact present percentage is not available, but according to the study covering the years from 1976 to 1979, this group represents the 10 per cent of unemployed youth which had continuing problems in obtaining employment—which in 1976-79 represented 50 per cent of unemployed youth, and on the other hand, we have businesses that are either reluctant to set up on-the-job training programs or do not have the financial resources but would agree to receiving government financial assistance in setting up such programs. All of this should be seen within the more general perspective that Canada is suffering from a general shortage of manpower for skilled blue-collar-type jobs. To fill these jobs, for many years we have had to import skilled workers such as bricklayers, masons and others from European countries. In fact, if we could manage to train young people for jobs where shortages exist, we would be killing two birds with one stone, namely, filling jobs now available and providing appropriate training for young people who are in desperate straits because they do not have the skills they need to find a job.

Mr. Speaker, I felt these comments were necessary in order to provide a more balanced picture of the unemployment situation, and especially of youth unemployment. To get back to my earlier example which showed young people in Quebec as having lost hope and expressing their bitterness in the