

Private Members' Business

A national policy on education that includes a national council on education which would examine all issues relevant to education.

An important ingredient of this plan is strengthened support to existing social programs such as health care and the creation of new social programs such as a national child care program.

It is also necessary to have comprehensive adjustment measures for workers such as the establishment of a mandatory job vacancy registry and job matching system through Canada Employment Centres and the establishment of adjustment committees for employees in positions where significant lay-offs are anticipated, to facilitate counselling, re-training and employment services for workers who are or may be laid off.

It is necessary as well to provide for examination of the impact of all federal fiscal policies on employment, including the mandate of the Bank of Canada.

These examples are all in the bill, and I think it is very important for a committee to consider the ways in which this part of the bill can be implemented.

[English]

One of the most important aspects of this bill is it will ensure that the government reports unemployment targets to the House of Commons as it now does with deficit reduction targets. By law the plan would be reviewed annually against targets for achieving full employment with adjustments required to meeting the targets of the plan to be reviewed within six months of the end of the year.

The point of this bill is that the government must be as accountable for the reduction of unemployment as it is for the reduction of the debt and the deficit.

There is a clear linkage between the policies of the government and the ability of our economy not to have a jobless recovery but to have a real recovery with jobs. Canadians who are now underemployed or unemployed would have work.

When I speak of labour market policies there are a number that must be taken into account. For example, in recent statistics we see the largest increase in the number of jobs has been in part time jobs. Many people may wish to work part time but others work part time because they have no option. There must be policies in place to ensure that part time workers receive benefits and that they receive full recognition for part time work. Saskatchewan has brought in benefits for part time workers. The federal government and other provinces should follow that model.

● (1110)

Other adequate labour market policies are absolutely necessary. I would like to mention some of the recommendations which have come out of the labour movement. In particular, the Canadian Labour Congress addressed the issue not only of job

creation but of the need to ensure that the existing work is more equitably spread. Many people work many hours of overtime while others rest without employment at all.

I would like to mention some of the recommendations of the Canadian Labour Congress. It specifically addresses the issue of how we attain full employment and the labour market policies which the government can put in place to facilitate that.

For example, there is the reduction of standard weekly hours to less than 40 hours per week. In the past there was a huge battle about limiting work hours. There is a requirement for employers to keep a log of all hours worked and more stringent limits on overtime, both weekly and annually.

We know many employers would rather pay overtime than to create a new job and take on a new employee because there is less book work and less hassle for the employer. We have to facilitate making it possible for the employer to do that. In some recent collective agreements, for example in automotive manufacturing, a whole new shift with a number of new employees has been employed and other employees have reduced their overtime.

The government should take the initiative in looking at those kinds of issues. Clearly in doing this we have to look at not simply reducing pay to workers. When looking at the work week and reductions in overtime and the accompanying labour market policies we must also ensure that benefits and other recompense are respected. Many kinds of these ideas are there. They can be acted upon by a government that really wants to deal with the issue and not simply speak about it.

I would like to speak briefly about the Minister of Human Resources Development's ongoing social policy review. It relates very closely to this plan for full employment. The goal of the review should be to make social programs more efficient but also more equitable. Accordingly the Minister of Human Resources Development in the context of his social policy review must consider adopting a comprehensive policy of full employment.

Lower unemployment means a lower deficit. The two are inextricably linked. That is the purpose of this bill: to say that the government of the day must give equal emphasis to reducing unemployment as to reducing the deficit because they are inextricably linked.

We do not need to cripple our social programs and marginalize the unemployed to reduce the deficit. That is like chopping up the furniture to heat the home. Let us start dealing with the fundamental structural problems of the bad economic policies we have seen pursued in this country.

Let us also get rid of the myth that unemployment is free. It is impossible to reduce a budget deficit when there is widespread unemployment. Official direct costs of unemployment to government were \$47.5 billion in 1993.