

*Private Members' Business*

is only one of the many partners that share in the control of and in the direction that the centre takes.

The other partners are also the principal beneficiaries of the products of the centre. The government, by this decision, is simply asking the other partners to accept a more equitable portion of the funding responsibility for the products that the centre has produced. They will be paying more only for the packaging and the distribution costs of the products they use. I do not think that is unreasonable; it is quite fair.

• (1310)

In the past the system has not been quite so fair. The federal government's jurisdiction in occupational health and safety embraces only one-tenth of the Canadian labour force or approximately one million workers, yet the federal government pays the majority of the centre's funding.

By contrast, the total membership of the Canadian Labour Congress is more than double the number of people in the federal jurisdiction. It seems to me that it is time that we found a more equitable cost sharing system.

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety has provided workers, unions, employers, governments and individuals alike with the necessary tools to protect their immediate health and safety needs, but we must remember that in turn they have been provided with the economic tools necessary to gain efficiency in the Canadian market-place. We agree and we recognize this point. We also agree that it is important that individuals, unions and small businesses have ready access to inexpensive information as it pertains to health and safety.

The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety has been the focal point for tripartite co-operation, innovation and effective information sharing since its inception in 1978. We agree that it is an essential and unique component of a national information system developed by Canadians to protect the lives and the health of workers and to sustain a viable economy through partnership.

**Mr. Bob Kilger (Stormont—Dundas):** Madam Speaker, I am grateful for the opportunity to speak today on the motion placed before this House by my colleague, the hon. member for Hamilton West.

Like my colleague I am very concerned about the decision of the federal government to withdraw funding for the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. The government should abandon this move and indicate as soon as possible that it will continue to provide the centre with federal funding.

There is no question as to the importance and value of the centre. It is a vital component in the protection of Canadian workers. The centre is renowned for the quality and magnitude of information and services it has on matters which relate to occupational health and safety in Canada and internationally.

The mandate of the centre involves the promotion of health and safety in the workplace and considers both the physical and mental health of workers. The centre has provided services which, as everyone will agree, have played an integral role in making the Canadian workplace safer and the economy more productive.

By having this excellent centre workers are that much closer to avoiding the far too many accidents which render them unable to work or worse. The occurrence of serious injury or death from job related accidents must be prevented. The centre has endeavoured, with recognizable success, to do just that since its inception in 1978.

Given the important role the centre has played, it is truly unconscionable that the federal government has decided to withdraw all of its funding to the centre by April 1991. The government provides the entire core budget funding for the centre. The total withdrawal of these funds will certainly have a negative impact upon the centre and its operations.

The money which has been given to the centre in the last 12 years by the federal government was money well spent. The centre has an annual budget usually between \$8 million and \$12 million. This works out to about \$1 per worker per year. This is not too much if one considers that the lives and the working conditions of Canadians are at stake here.

The Minister of Labour stated in this House on April 28 of last year: "Work accidents entail direct and indirect costs of about \$17.5 billion a year". The minister went on to say that this is, in his own words, "a very heavy burden