

Government Orders

family needs. One would ask how we can help those families and those parents do better.

The minister came up with a number of options. He proposed that we can and should work with the provinces to increase the number of child care spaces. The government already has set aside new funding for up to 150,000 new child care spaces and we will work with the provinces to decide how the money will be spent. Also the government could work with employers to find ways to encourage flex time and a shorter work week.

Also we can invest to help meet the child care needs of parents in paid employment. That makes good economic sense. Some of the benefits would perhaps include more productive employees, jobs for child care workers and less pressure on welfare programs.

Those are some of the things we can do. I could go on but I see that my time is coming to an end. I conclude by congratulating this government on a job well done and I welcome the Prime Minister home after a wonderful trip. It is going to create many jobs for now and the future.

Mr. George S. Rideout (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Natural Resources, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first I want to compliment the parliamentary secretary on an excellent and insightful discourse. The sheer volume of facts, figures and information was quite edifying for all members of Parliament I am sure. I would like to ask a couple of questions in two areas.

With his experience in international trade as parliamentary secretary to the minister, I am sure he is aware of the types of educational requirements needed. If we are going to make this economy work, not only do we have to make government function better but we have to make the economy grow. The Prime Minister in his trip to China and the Asia-Pacific has shown the opportunities that are available to Canadians. We have to make the Canadian workforce ready for those opportunities. Perhaps the parliamentary secretary could show us how the social safety net could be utilized in order to take advantage of those international opportunities.

Perhaps the parliamentary secretary could also discuss some of the things experienced in New Brunswick. There are disincentives built into the present system. I am thinking particularly of the UI system in which it is better to stay on UI than to go out and get a job. I am thinking of the welfare system in which it is better to stay on welfare because after taking a low paying low skilled position and getting off welfare the benefits available under the welfare system such as dental care, clothing allowances and allowances for single parents are lost.

For anyone to say that the status quo is acceptable, that we can leave things exactly the way they are obviously has no real

understanding of the tremendous change that is necessary and which this government has embarked upon.

I would ask the parliamentary secretary to comment on the disincentives in the UI system and in the welfare systems in the different provinces and also to offer some hope to Canadians through the opportunities in the international marketplace.

Mr. Harb: Madam Speaker, I thank my colleague. It was because of his effort and his former experience as a mayor on the Federation of Canadian Municipalities that I was inspired along with my colleague from Nepean to co-chair the Liberal infrastructure task force which went across the country. It visited his home province. The task force came back with a report that was adopted by our caucus. I thank him again for his interest in the well-being of his constituents.

• (1640)

The hon. member asked me to mention the kinds of things we could do to prepare our workers and industries. We have to focus on training. Training and retraining is the key. People might ask: Training for what? That question deserves an answer.

The global economy as they call it and you can call it whatever you want, but every country in the world economy is using high technology tools such as computers, robotics, machinery with advanced technology. Canadian industries have not adapted to that. About 50 per cent of Canadian companies do not use advanced technology instruments to help productivity.

After Belgium, Austria and Australia, Canada's expenditures per capita on research and development are the third largest in the world but the private sector is nowhere to be seen. Canada's private sector, industry in Canada is not spending enough money on research and development. Because the job market is going to require at least a grade 13 education and the required information base, understanding and knowledge, we have to invest in the areas of research and development, education and training.

The member asked what we could do to improve employment services. The minister is already looking at ways and tools to improve these services such as individual job counselling, helping people develop their own employment plan, providing information about the job market, pointing people in the right direction, giving them access to basic skills training, and helping them with reading, writing and math. We must give them better training programs to acquire skills that match—a key buzzword—the local labour market. That is very important. Train them for what? That is the key. Many of my constituents ask what they are being trained for.

We must work in co-operation with the private sector. It takes two hands to clap. You cannot clap with one hand. Government cannot do it all by itself. We need the co-operation of the private sector. We have to work with it hand in hand.