

Government Orders

process should be open to new ideas from all Canadians, not just the so-called elite.

The best design for our social programs will come from an open bottom up process. It is time to start putting our trust in the common sense of common people. As we embark on this process of change, we could learn something from the private sector.

Every year the Fraser Institute holds an economy-in-government competition. This competition is open to all Canadians. Canadians are asked to submit ideas to the Fraser Institute on how to save government money without reducing services. A panel of experts reviews the submissions and selects the finalists, and the finalists submit complete proposals. The panel reviews the proposals and selects the winners, who win substantial cash prizes.

The whole process works much like a suggestion award program. The Fraser Institute publishes the winning proposals and sends them to the federal and provincial governments. I recommend that the government seriously consider this kind of approach to kick off this process of reform.

This suggestion award approach would be exciting. It would permit all Canadians to get directly involved in the modernization and restructuring of our social programs and it would reward those Canadians who come up with the good ideas that government implements.

If the government is interested in the grassroots approach, the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development could design and administer the suggestion award program.

In conclusion, fishermen in Saskatchewan have designated many lakes as catch-and-release lakes. This means one can catch as many fish as one wants but one releases them so they can continue to grow and propagate, providing more fun and relaxation for sport fishermen and, I might add, generating more revenue for the government. Maybe we should start a catch-and-release program for those unfortunate people who have got caught in our social safety nets so they can be retrained, find work and, I might add again, generate more revenue for the government.

I look forward to participating in this exciting process of change.

Mr. Andy Scott (Fredericton—York—Sunbury): Mr. Speaker, in my time I would like to address the remarks made by the member.

I have to say that on a number of issues I would agree in terms of where the speaker would have us go. He mentioned things such as a consultative process that would buy Canadians into the new programs the government will get to. He mentioned the

need for a consolidated income program, which I would also support.

The difference, however, is what would motivate the direction that is proposed. I made note of the fact that he mentioned that the UI program is unfair to contributors—or there was a reference to that—or that sometimes UI is too user friendly. As a contributor to unemployment insurance, I would rather be me than most people in Canada who have to draw on that benefit.

● (1730)

If there is an unfairness out there, if there is someone who needs relief and needs the government to take their side, I really believe it is the people on the other side of the spectrum who need my contributions, because I really believe they are a lot worse off than I am.

Having said that, I look forward to the debate. I think it is important that Canadians buy into the programs they are called upon to finance and support. It is important for the people who receive benefits from these programs to know that Canadians support these programs as well. I welcome the opportunity to debate this. I suspect it is going to be an interesting debate.

In large part the kinds of change promoted by the previous speaker and the kinds of change promoted by the government side are similar. Maybe it is just the motivation that is a little different in terms of who it is we are trying to help.

Mr. Breitzkreuz (Yorkton—Melville): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate very much the comments that have just been made. I also appreciate the atmosphere that exists in this House at the present time. It is non-confrontational and we are working together. We do not have all the solutions, but I think we can work together toward some of them.

One thing mentioned was the unemployment insurance. If we had taken some of the recommendations of the Forget commission and implemented them, if we had put UI on an actuarially sound basis where the premiums paid for it and employers and employees were responsible for administering it, we would not have the deficit or the debt that we have at the present time. It is good to implement some of these recommendations and not just throw out the baby with the bath water.

I look forward to working together on this. I do not know if there was a question asked, but those would be my comments. We should try to get some of these plans on a more financially sound basis. We cannot continue to go into debt at the rate we are now. It is going to threaten all of our social programs. The interest payments, over \$40 billion, are horrendous, and that is going to bring this country to its knees. We have to do something right now to preserve our social programs by being careful about how we spend our money.