

*Private Members' Business*

and provide them with training and retraining opportunities that will allow them to participate fully in a thriving economy.

I know that he is sincere in putting forward his motion and his ambition to build a strong and competitive future for our country through full employment.

I would like to point out to him that laudable though his intentions may be, the motion he has placed before the House displays a lack of understanding about what is feasible in a land as diverse and complex as Canada. It shows a disturbing inability to grasp the complexities of our labour market.

I would like also to remind the hon. member that this government has always understood the importance of investing in our citizens. Indeed, we are at this moment making the very types of social investment he advocates in his motion. These investments come in the form of training and retraining Canadian workers in programs offered through the Canadian Jobs Strategy and our Labour Force Development Strategy.

We have always maintained that the failure to preserve a competitive workforce would have dire consequences not only for the individuals who lost their jobs but for Canada's economic prospects as well. That is why we have dedicated more dollars to job training and skill enhancement than any government in the history of Canada.

I noticed that the hon. member's motion did not define "full employment". This is understandable. Our organizations such as the Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council which is also keen to see full employment has stated: "It would be impossible to come up with a definition of full employment with which everyone would agree."

In effect, the Advisory Council acknowledged that defining full employment would be as complicated as Rubic's cube. In its recent report on unemployment, the Canada Employment and Immigration Advisory Council suggested that the figure of 4 per cent unemployment might be considered full employment.

It is our view that the selection of a single unemployment target such as 4 per cent is not feasible nor is it realistic, because Canada remains a country of great regional diversity. Governments cannot push a button to replenish the cod stocks in the Atlantic nor force

automobile plants to the Gaspé coast where unemployment is particularly severe.

On top of that, Canada like the rest of the industrialized world, is facing rapid economic changes as international trading and manufacturing patterns evolve to adjust to a much more dynamic and unpredictable global market.

The choice of targets such as 4 per cent for full employment can also be very misleading. In fact, the unemployment rate of 4 per cent or less can even mask great disparities.

When the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood was making his remarks in this debate, he made reference to financial institutions that may be able to present programs and have loans, mortgages and other financial transactions at a lesser rate than some of our banks and trust companies today.

I might say that my son is employed with Van City Savings and Loans in Vancouver, which I believe is the largest credit union in the world. It competes very well in that vibrant financial market in Vancouver with some pretty large numbers. It has done very well, but I might also note that most of the chief executive officers have come from some pretty large corporations to direct it and to give it good advice as it carries on down the road.

There are good areas for it. But it is not the workers' nirvana. Co-operatives have many forms.

At one time in business I formed a company where I had all the shareholders, who were mainly the employees, with the same amount of common stock. My investment differential was in the preferred shares. They said as long as the company made a profit and paid a dividend out of current earnings, that is the way it would run. But if the company lost money for two consecutive years, then the preferred shares would have voting power and the direction of the company could be changed. There are many forms that a co-operative can take. It is not the answer to all things in business, but it does have a place to play.

Let us compare the year 1967 in Canada, when the unemployment rate was 3.8 per cent to 1988, when the unemployment rate was 7.8 per cent. A single comparison of the two numbers would suggest that Canadians were better off in 1967 than they were in 1988.