

*Oral Questions*

great deal of money on manpower training programs which are obviously not providing Canadians skills so that they can take those jobs? The program is not working.

**Mr. Cullen:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member talks about a cheap shot and comes out with misleading information. I indicated that these advertisements are not authorized by the government. They can spend whatever money they want, but these workers still have to clear our department. They will not clear the department if Canadians have these skills and if Canadians can fill the jobs.

I disagree with the hon. member. The training program is excellent. We buy the courses because education comes under provincial jurisdiction. The provincial governments make the determination of the kinds of skills they would like to see and the people they would like to see trained. On that basis, we buy these courses under our adult occupational training program.

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**SOCIAL SERVICES**

## PROPOSED STUDY OF SOCIAL COST OF UNEMPLOYMENT

**Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker—

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** I thank hon. members for that expression. I gather they are trying to give me a good send-off for my second 35 years.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Hees:** To the Senate, Stan.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** I thought I had friends here.

I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of statistics out of Toronto—which I suspect would be found to be parallel to those in other parts of the country—concerning the increasing number of suicides, a large portion of them being due to unemployment or other forms of economic distress, will the minister have her department undertake a study of the social cost of unemployment with particular reference to suicides, mental illness, physical illness, family disorders and criminal tendencies so that the government, members of parliament and the people at large can be aware of how urgent it is to cope with the problem of unemployment?

**Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, I have mixed feelings about my reply to the hon. gentleman. I wanted to join with my hon. colleagues in this House in congratulating him on his long tenure of office and the work he has done on many government programs, but he just made an assumption which is so serious—and I am tempted to say almost bearing on irresponsibility—

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

[Mr. Cullen.]

**Miss Bégin:**—that I feel obliged to emphasize that there are no facts to justify relating unemployment to the rate of suicides. My department is monitoring this, and this was one of the first dossiers on which I asked for a briefing. We are monitoring and following the work of agencies in the private and para-public sector which are particularly good at analyzing social factors and other factors leading to suicide. The group of people which preoccupies me most is the one comprised of young people. I do not have at this moment a report on that, but before answering other questions on this topic I would like to verify exactly what the hon. member is referring to by talking with him later on.

**Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the minister will permit me to send over to her reports which show that these statistics come from responsible social agencies and also a document showing that in at least one other western country a serious study has been made which does show such a correlation between unemployment and social problems, including suicides. In the meantime, in view of the minister's responsibility for the health of Canadians will she use all the clout she has in the cabinet to push for programs which will minimize unemployment?

**Miss Bégin:** Mr. Speaker, I think it is obvious that we are all committed to such programs.

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[Translation]

**REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION**SUGGESTION DEPARTMENT WILL BE ABANDONED—  
GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Pierre De Bané (Matane):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the right hon. Prime Minister.

Considering that newspapers report again that the government intends to eliminate the Department of Regional Economic Expansion and other departments, could the leader of the government tell us if there is some truth in that information which was published again yesterday to the effect that the government intends to eliminate the Department of Regional Economic Expansion?

**Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** Mr. Speaker, I think that the minister himself indicated that those rumours were false. I shall simply add that they might originate from the fact that, more and more, we hear the premiers, their ministers and newspapers congratulating the government for its initiative, recapitulating the amounts spent during the eight or nine years of existence of that department and asking the federal government to continue that beautiful enterprise. I can say to the hon. member that we are satisfied that those rumours give to those who were against it, including hon. members of the party opposite, the opportunity to realize the great utility of that department.