

Adjournment Debate

Simple things such as allowing children to have lunch at school so that they do not have to travel, offering flexible work schedules and offering a flexible transit system to seniors would also foster the emergence of a family oriented policy.

In the past, the federal government, and this includes the Liberal government, showed a lack of vision and a lack of courage towards Quebecers and Canadians with respect to family oriented policies.

We, the members of the Bloc Quebecois, are convinced that a review of our social programs starts with the development of a real family oriented policy in Canada as well as in Quebec. Whatever options the Liberal Party has, it is difficult for us to think that this government can ignore the fundamental changes that family structures have undergone in Canada and Quebec since the introduction of social programs.

[English]

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development): Mr. Speaker, the UI premium rate for 1994 has been set at the minimum rate required under the Unemployment Insurance Act. The rate will not be increased during 1994. Furthermore, the government will introduce legislation to prevent the UI premium rate from rising in 1995 as would otherwise occur under the provisions of the Unemployment Insurance Act.

The UI program is self-financing from premiums paid by employees and employers. The federal government temporarily finances UI deficits but premium revenues must eventually match UI costs. We therefore might have paid for the freeze by allowing the deficit in the UI account to rise, thus postponing the day it would return to balance, but we decided that would be imprudent.

There is widespread recognition of the need for a comprehensive reform of Canada's social security programs. No department or government on its own could design all the appropriate changes. Therefore we hope members of the House from all

parties will participate in the reform of social programs including unemployment insurance.

As the Minister of Human Resources Development said in response to the hon. member's original question, the review of the social security system that was launched in the House on January 31 will consider the issues of unemployment insurance rates and premiums in a broader context.

The hon. member will agree that the problems facing Canadians in the 1990s go far beyond the financing of the UI system. Unemployment, poverty, global competitiveness, changes in the work place and skill shortages are only some of the factors we must consider in the process of rebuilding the social security, labour market and learning framework of our country.

The scope of the review will include UI but will extend beyond it to include training and employment programs, social assistance and income security, education and learning, labour practices and rules affecting the workplace, and taxes and premiums that affect job creation.

Our goal is to reduce reliance on programs like unemployment insurance by helping people to get back to work. This is the mandate we received from the Canadian people in the October 25 election. This is our commitment and this is what the social security reform process is all about.

As the hon. member knows, the minister outlined a process for reform that will consult widely with Canadians from all walks of life on these important issues. The process respects the jurisdiction—

The Deputy Speaker: I am sorry to say that the member's time has expired.

[Translation]

The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly, this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at ten o'clock, pursuant to Standing Orders 24(1).

(The House adjourned at 6.30 p.m.)