

of \$600,000 for a new women's transition home. The original building dated from 1977, one of the first women's transition houses in Canada. This shows our commitment to the family and our concern for the innocent victims of its breakdown.

Today's small community of Enderby, with the highest per capita number of senior citizens in Canada second only to Victoria, was famed in the late 1800s for growing wheat and milling and shipping flour around the Pacific rim, loaded at Fortune's Landing. Today Enderby and all of Okanagan—Shuswap is concerned that government pensions be maintained for households with incomes below the Canadian average.

I wish to praise the government for this motion indicating that it is prepared to ask Canadians what social programs it values the most and, hopefully, what areas of government spending it is willing to see cut in order to pay for those essential programs.

● (1225)

However, the Reform Party already asked Canadians those very questions at the start of the 1993 federal election campaign in our program called, Let the People Speak. Canadians told us most important was health care, pensions for households with incomes below the Canadian average, higher education and the environment. We therefore pledged that if we formed the next government we would maintain those programs at the same level in real dollars.

Canadians agreed that we should cut deeply in other areas of spending, including federally funded bilingualism and grants for multiculturalism and for special interest groups to pay for the most essential programs.

Canadians know that the only way to ensure the future of our treasured social programs is to be sure they are fully funded and on a sound financial footing we can sustain for the future.

Sustaining any program means we as a nation must create wealth. The way to create wealth is to have jobs. I know the voters back home in Okanagan—Shuswap are profoundly concerned about jobs, as are most Canadians. Because I have the honour of chairing the Reform caucus committee on labour and employment, I would like to comment on job implications of this motion.

The 1963 throne speech proclaimed, in loud and forceful terms, that any Canadian, young or old, who wanted a job must be able to find one. Back in the early 1960s the so-called full rate of unemployment was estimated by the Economic Council of Canada to be about 3 per cent, making some allowances for people changing jobs. Today we are not even dreaming about having a job for every Canadian who wants one let alone actually working and planning for that most desirable goal.

Government Orders

According to Statistics Canada there were 14,022,000 people employed in Canada last month. They are the people who carry the load of producing some 58 per cent of this country's total tax revenue on their shoulders. They will be the ones who pay for any presently unfunded programs.

Let me quote from the Year-End Review and 1994 Economic Outlook of the Canadian Manufacturers' Association. It states: "It takes the average company seven hours and fifty minutes in an eight-hour production shift just to cover operating costs. Taxes must be paid on top of that. Manufacturers are responding to these cash pressures by increasing operational efficiency and improving productivity. However, with their backs to the wall there is often little option open in the short term but to reduce costs by focusing on overhead and cutting jobs. Unless the cost burden that governments impose on businesses is significantly reduced prospects for future investment or employment do not appear very bright".

In a section of that report labelled Jobs on the Line, the Canadian Manufacturers' Association states: "The average Canadian manufacturer is having to restructure today in order to cover fixed costs, forcing companies to reduce their labour costs in an effort to keep overall unit costs of production under control. Manufacturers are responding in one or a number of ways: contracting out services once performed in-house; relying more heavily on part-time workers; extending the work day; attempting to freeze or reduce wages, salaries and benefits; or downsizing their work force. Labour costs are being cut because they are one of the few variable costs that firms are able to reduce. Of the more than 325,000 jobs lost in Canadian manufacturing since mid-1989, about 60 per cent can be attributed to cost pressures unrelated to production performances".

In short, increasing taxes decreases jobs. Therefore, I must conclude by urging the government to recognize that the only sure way to keep the social programs which Canadians treasure is to control spending enough to improve the employment picture in Okanagan—Shuswap and all of Canada.

[Translation]

Mr. Laurent Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry): Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the last speaker and I generally agree with most of what he said. However, there is one remaining problem which has to be solved as quickly as possible.

When you take a look at what has happened in Quebec over the last two years, you realize that the ministers responsible for manpower training, Mr. Valcourt in Ottawa and Mr. Bourbeau in Quebec, met several times and even argued at times to get the results we now know of. Right now in Quebec, there are over 80,000 jobs available and our employment situation is abysmal. More than 25,000 people have applied for development training, but the funds allocated to the institutions delivering those training programs are frozen. This situation is unacceptable.