

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Monday, September 19, 1994

The House met at 11 a.m.

Prayers

[English]

The Speaker: I wish to inform the House that in accordance with the representation made by the government under the provisions of Standing Order 55(1) I have caused to be published a special order paper giving notice of introduction of government bills. I now lay the relevant document upon the table.

[Translation]

My dear colleagues, I have the honour to lay on the table a copy of the reprint of the Standing Orders of the House of Commons, dated September 1994, which includes all amendments to the Standing Orders since the beginning of the session.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS

[English]

FULL EMPLOYMENT ACT

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon) moved that Bill C-209, an act to provide for full employment in Canada, be read the second time and referred to a committee.

She said: Madam Speaker, today I rise in this Parliament to speak to what I believe is one of the biggest issues facing each one of us here and one of the greatest responsibilities, jobs and job creation.

We are still in double digit unemployment. There are still far too many people unemployed. It is time this government took direct action and accountability for unemployment levels.

Bill C-209, an act to provide for full employment in Canada, will ensure that the government is as accountable for job creation as it is for deficit reduction.

A full employment strategy means that all of the federal government's activities, managing interest rates and the dollar, dealing with trading partners, investing in new businesses and innovation, helping workers retrain, and every other aspect of

federal economic and social policy are guided by the objective of achieving full employment.

Full employment does not mean an unemployment rate of zero per cent. Economists estimate that it is generally considered between 3 and 4 per cent. It does mean that there is no permanent structural unemployment and that it is a set of precepts by which other policies should be guided. Full employment also does not mean that the government guarantees everyone a job. It means that the number of jobs available in public and private sectors is very close to the number of people active in the workforce.

The objectives of a full employment policy have been proven over and over again in other countries to work very well in concert with proper labour market policies.

A full employment economic strategy will build social justice with unemployment and underemployment reduced. The devastation of poverty and a lack of choices and opportunities are tragedies that characterize our present economic system, one that is clearly in failure.

[Translation]

I would like to explain, first of all, that this bill requires the minister to prepare a draft plan for the achievement of full employment in Canada and lay it before Parliament.

• (1105)

The draft plan would then be reviewed by a standing committee of the House of Commons. The minister would consider the report and recommendations of the committee in the preparation of a final plan. The plan would be reviewed annually against the targets for achieving full employment, and the report on any adjustments necessary to meet the targets of the plan would be prepared within six months of the end of the year and laid before Parliament.

I have quite a few recommendations on how this objective should be achieved—in fact, there are 22—but I will just describe a few. For instance, an environmental awareness program that would promote the goal of sustainable development through new environmental technologies, sewage treatment facilities and energy efficiency programs.

It is therefore necessary to have an investment policy that includes the right to review and regulate foreign investment in Canada, a national investment fund that operates at arms-length from the government and an elimination of corporations' rights to deduct interest expenses from taxable income.