

Private Members' Business

with disabilities as to all other children within those school systems.

It is perhaps appropriate that we leave to the provinces the delivery of education services within their jurisdictions. Rather than intrude, particularly at a time for example when we are going through severe constitutional difficulties, shall we say, and considerable discussions, I am not sure how well an intrusion by the Government of Canada would be in this area of education during these delicate constitutional negotiations.

I see the chairperson of the very eminent committee that recently reported on the Constitution. I expect that she may well be able to attest to what I am saying, that the provinces would not welcome an intrusion by the federal government at this time into the field of education.

Nevertheless, it is an important matter. I commend the member for bringing it forward. Similarly, I might say that he need not be concerned with whether or not this government is going to respond adequately, appropriately and indeed compassionately and fully to the needs of Canadians with disabilities. I do not think there has been a government in the history of this country that has been so responsive to the needs of Canadians with disabilities.

That does not mean that there is not a lot more that can be done. I for one, certainly when I reflect on my own personal experience over the years as a human rights commissioner in my province of Nova Scotia in working with courageous Canadians with disabilities who face challenges that some of us do not have to face in our lives, believe it is important that as Canadians we always recognize the needs of our fellow Canadians in all their dimensions. I want to assure the hon. member that this government is extremely conscious of those Canadians and the need to support their efforts to take their full place in Canadian society.

I want to assure him that this government is fully committed to the needs of disabled Canadians and to seeing them fully integrated into Canadian life.

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, first I want to commend my colleague, the member for Moose Jaw—Lake Centre, for having undertaken this initiative which I consider an extremely laudable one. The very fact that we are discussing it I think is

particularly important and hopefully can lead to some changes that might be useful to those Canadians who have certain disabilities.

I also want to thank the parliamentary secretary for his particular comments, which I found for the most part helpful. I do not mean to suggest there were some that were not, but some were more supportive than others.

With regard to the intrusion into provincial jurisdiction, I shall speak to that. I think that there are ways of going forward without doing that and I shall propose a few ways that we might want to consider.

We all know that the government has not had a particularly progressive record in the area of education. I do not say that unkindly. I think the intent, the addresses that have been given, have been well intentioned. If one looks at the record it has not been the most flattering.

I think the government could recoup some of its losses if it were to go forward with this bill or something similar. As my colleague from Moose Jaw has indicated, if the wording is not appropriate, providing that sense of direction is maintained, there is no particular problem.

When I say that the government might be able to recoup, I mean that in a very serious and sincere kind of way.

[*Translation*]

What this government has done in education leaves much to be desired. From 1986 to 1995, transfers of funds will be cut by some \$10 billion. That means \$10 billion less will be transferred to the provinces for college and university education.

As for training and retraining, for example, we realize that there is less money today, given the number of unemployed people, than a few years ago.

Although a promise was made to double investment in research and development, we know very well that the amount has slipped. The percentage of GDP is less than it was.

We know that the government had the right intentions for literacy. But take a good look at what it invested: somewhat less than \$5 per individual in need of help. Of course, they have to work with the provinces in this field. It is not the only investment, but it still leaves something to be desired.