

*Government Orders*

It creates a reliance upon the system and people say: "If we can get 30 or 40 weeks, if we can lay off our workers for June and July—which many school boards do—and we can save some money, then let us do it". What they do not say is that some person down the street, perhaps a short order cook in a restaurant, is paying a premium every week to pay for that layoff when it is not necessary. That is not fair. It kills jobs. As a result, we have seen the premiums double or triple in the last six or seven years.

Is that the kind of system we want to protect? Is that the kind of system those who say not to touch the programs want to maintain, a system that does not reward work but rewards dependency? I do not think Canadians want that. They want us to take a different look at things.

Let us take a moment to look at the whole question of another change going on in our country. Fifty per cent of the jobs over the next five years are going to require a post-secondary education. In fact, statistics over the last year indicate there was a 17 per cent growth in jobs for people who had a post-secondary education or better. On the other side of the coin there was a 19 per cent loss of jobs for those who had less than a post-secondary education.

In the meantime we continue to see dropout rates of 15, 20, 30 per cent depending on the region. Young people who know they are facing a radically different workplace and require radically different skills are dropping out of school. They will become the next generation of people who find themselves pushed to the sidelines.

One of the key issues is how to increase those opportunities in accessibility. That is what the green paper talks about. It talks about that re-equipment. We are saying if we can look at the unemployment insurance system, take money that is exclusively paid for benefits and turn it into an employment service fund, then we can offer those people a chance to go back to school, a chance to become literate, a chance to get good counselling, a chance to have a job corps for older workers, a chance once again to put their talents to work.

We are jointly funding an experiment in New Brunswick. It is the New Brunswick job corps for older workers. Up to now a seasonal worker in that area had no hope, especially when there was no more seasonal work when forestry declined. Now we are putting close to 2,000 workers into reforestation. We are rebuilding the natural resource, creating a wealth and resource base for the next generation. People involved in that project say that once again they have a reason to put their boots on in the morning. They have something that gives real value to what they are doing. That is why we need those resources.

We are saying very clearly in the paper that this will give us an opportunity for new partnerships. As much as we are talking in

the paper about changing the programs we are also changing the way government should work. We are saying that the most effective role of government is to put resources into the hands of people and let them make choices. We have an opportunity to develop new partnerships with the provinces, business, labour and local communities.

• (1100)

Two weeks ago I signed agreements with representatives of the North York Board of Education, Niagara Community College, labour and business representatives in the electrical industry. We are putting up 25 cents of every training dollar—not a full dollar like we pay in other places—which is matched by the employees, employers and the province to provide new apprenticeship places for close to 300 or 400 young people so they can begin getting those new skills.

That is what I mean by partnership. That is what I mean by decentralizing decision making. That is what I mean by once again giving people a chance to make decisions in their own communities: by decentralizing the system, by government working in a different way as a facilitator, an enabler, by breaking down the bureaucracies, the hierarchies and by once again restoring at the local level, the business level and the shop level the chance to make decisions for your own self-improvement, your own self-sufficiency.

That is what this paper is all about. It is about a new way of governing that gives real power to people. It is not power to bureaucracies but real power back to the people to make decisions for themselves.

*[Translation]*

Some accuse us of taking a centralizing approach. I would like to know what is the basis for that assertion, what page of the document are they referring to? I will tell you what page. On page 27 of the green book, we undertake to clarify the roles and responsibilities of each level of government consistent with the Constitution. On page 40, we propose transferring funds and responsibilities to the provinces.

On page 61, we give the provinces the possibility of opting out in the fields of education and student assistance. On page 73, we propose making social assistance legislation more flexible in order to finance Quebec's APPORT program and relinquish decision-making authority to that province. On page 76, we propose a block fund for social assistance to give the provinces more control and flexibility.

Throughout the document we talk about co-operation, about opting out, about flexibility and decentralization. These are not the words of a centralizing government but the characteristics of a new, dynamic federalism.