

Supply

upgrade the skills of people on the labour market; \$12 million in 1989-90 and \$13.3 million in 1990-91. And "Community Futures", \$8.5 million in 1989-90 and \$11.8 million in 1990-91. Total spending was \$112 million in 1989-90 and will be \$121 million in 1990-91.

I don't know whether the hon. member for Winnipeg North has these figures but I wish he would explain how he can talk about cuts, when these figures tell us the exact opposite, Mr. Speaker. Does he have an explanation?

[English]

Mr. Pagtakhan: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to reply. When one looks at a set of figures and finds that one has spent a certain amount, it has to be related to the amount that is required for the given activity, in this instance child poverty. I am glad that the government had to spend this money. I would be doubly aghast if it had not.

My submission is that this government has not spent enough. The fact remains, it is very clear, it does not need any complex analysis. We still have one million poor Canadian children. How do we explain to these children that the government has spent enough?

The hon. member commented on retraining programs. They are good too. However, if there is no job to be found after the training, what is the training for? We just heard in the news last Friday that some 60,000 jobs were lost during the month of November, over and above the job loss in October. Do we say that this government has good fiscal and monetary policy? No.

The Minister of Finance in his last budget said we could expect a rise in unemployment, indicating that unemployment is government economic policy. I am really perplexed. Unemployment immediately translates into poverty. Witness after witness who appeared before the subcommittee on poverty of the standing committee on health and welfare have said so.

Is the hon. member telling me now and telling this House that those witnesses who work for poor children, who work for the poor of our country, are wrong? I submit that the government is wrong and those people are right. The children of Canada are lucky that we have these people who advocate for them because children cannot vote, but still also have hearts and minds to be protected.

Mr. Don Boudria (Glengarry—Prescott—Russell): Mr. Speaker, I listened with attention to the remarks of our colleague. I know he is a paediatrician and professor of medicine. He certainly knows what he is talking about when he speaks of children.

Mr. Lewis: Which is remarkable for members on that side of the House.

Mr. Boudria: "Which is remarkable in a similar way to other speeches of members of the opposition", I believe is what the Minister of Transport said. I am paraphrasing here so that it can be on the record.

I want to ask our colleague, who is obviously very knowledgeable in this area, if he recalls, as I do, that just prior to the last election campaign the government produced a program of child care, not a perfect one. It was certainly faulty. The government produced that program, brought it to the attention of the House and then when the program was actually before the Senate, it called the election prior to the bill being approved by the Senate and then failed to reintroduce the same legislation after the election was over.

I wonder if my colleague recalls that, and given that he probably does, will he tell us in his opinion if he agrees with me that this government was not sincere when it said it wanted to have a national child care strategy, that it was all empty rhetoric and it was attempting to find some way of scuttling its own bill, which eventually it succeeded in by calling the election at a time when the bill was before the Senate, thereby allowing it to die on the Order Paper.

Mr. Pagtakhan: Mr. Speaker, as usual my colleague is always keen in picking up on very important issues and certainly child care is one.

Mr. Lewis: I know it is Christmas, but this is a bit much.

• (1740)

Mr. Pagtakhan: Mr. Speaker, it is the essence of Christmas that we challenge and rekindle in us the warmth of the human spirit, the spirit of fortitude and generosity. In that way we can spread goodwill and make warm friendships and cultivate the love of family. Love of family means that we should have the means with which to take care of our children.

When working mothers, particularly single parents, need child care spaces and cannot find one, what do we say to them? It is not fair. It is not fair that this government would promise to do something during an