

Routine Proceedings

are questions we all hope the minister will answer very soon.

In his announcement today, the minister said this was an investment of \$1.8 billion in Canadian workers. Let us be perfectly honest here, this is \$1.8 billion of UI premiums paid for by the workers of Canada and by the employers of Canada. Not one dollar is paid for by this government. Let us be absolutely clear what we are talking about when we make these announcements that we are doing all these grand and wonderful things for the workers in Canada.

This \$1.8 billion is only possible as well because of longer entrance requirements and shorter eligibility for those who are on unemployment insurance or need to go on unemployment insurance. Let us not monkey around with what the real world is about in the world of unemployment insurance. Let us not try to give the workers a snow job that this government is doing them a great big favour. Let us be really clear about what we are talking about.

Having said that, I want to acknowledge that the government is recognizing the importance of training and education. The recommendations of the Labour Force Development Board are being acknowledged by this government and are being implemented, as the minister just stated.

It is not a case any more of whether or not we agree with Bill C-21. That bill has passed and now we are dealing with a reality based on that bill. Therefore, I must say that I am pleased to see this training being made available for Canadian workers.

Recommendations are very important, but I think it is also important that we read into the record something said by the co-chairs of the Canadian Labour Force Development Board. That recommendation was to the minister:

You are no doubt aware that there has been a great deal of controversy about whether unemployment insurance funds should be used to pay for anything other than income support

It is important to be explicit here, as it is in the report, that the board is not passing judgment on this issue within its recommendations. Indeed, the board is committed to dealing with this issue as part of an ongoing work program. In other words, we all have our hands tied and can only deal within the parameters of what is in the Unemployment Insurance Act since Bill C-21.

• (1240)

The previous speaker from the opposition side of the House said, and I concur, that it is terribly unfortunate that on one hand we see an increase in funding for training, but at the same time this government is providing for cuts. Actually, it is not at the same time, it provided for it earlier this year in the Canadian Jobs Strategy. Only yesterday we had representatives here from the United Fishermen and Allied Workers Union from British Columbia. They were seeking a meeting with the minister, which they did not get, to plead with the minister to ensure that the employment fund that was provided last year be extended this year. This is because fishermen in B.C. and shore workers in B.C. are unable to qualify for unemployment insurance under the new guidelines of Bill C-21.

The minister responded to a question in the House by saying that he would review this. We must plead that if this government is concerned about the unemployed in this country, if the minister is supporting his colleague on this prosperity kick we are on in Canada on this big \$20 million show, then surely to God we could get \$1 million, or between \$1 million and \$3 million, out of a \$20 million budget. It started at \$15 million on Tuesday and by Thursday it was a \$20 million budget for prosperity bumb in Canada. Now we cannot get \$1 million to \$3 million to save the fishermen and the industry in British Columbia. It would seem to me that we have a government speaking out of both sides of its mouth on this issue.

I want to talk a little bit about what is in this statement by the minister and what is in his announcement. As I have said, we believe that the UI fund should remain primarily an income support program. We should be finding alternate mechanisms for training funding. At the same time, we should be looking elsewhere. I want to give a couple of examples of elsewhere. In Sweden, training is seen as a responsibility of the employer. Wages are subsidized to new entrants to the work force and the employer ends up with a skilled worker in the future. This is not so in Canada. The workers have to pay for training out of the very fund that has been set up to protect them when they are unemployed.

A couple of years ago the president of Boeing said that he could sell 10 Dash-8 aircraft per month, but they only had a work force capable of building five Dash-8 aircraft in that time. This represented a multimillion dollar loss every month, not to mention the tax losses that this