

### *Government Orders*

Recently I had the pleasure of hosting a social security workshop in my riding of Lincoln. Approximately 70 constituents took the time to come out and address their concerns. They raised a number of important issues.

They felt that government must remove the disincentives to work and that government should provide some sort of income supplement but only to those individuals who need it. We must stop duplicating training programs. We need to work with industry and the provinces to ensure that they are efficient and practical. Industry and government have to work together to ensure that programs meet the needs of tomorrow's workers. We should look at more effective ways of forecasting for jobs. We also had widespread endorsement for the idea of restructuring student loans based on the ability for students to repay those loans.

Since the release of the discussion paper more than 190 public town hall meetings have been planned by members of Parliament, including several members from across the floor. The feedback we have been getting is that Canadians understand the need for reform and recognize that change is not only inevitable but essential. Canadians may differ on the solutions but whether these town hall meetings are held in Bridgewater or Whitehorse, Canadians want to be an integral part of the dialogue and the debate.

Community agencies are getting involved in the consultation process. Agencies such as the United Way, the Laurier Institute, the Atlantic Provinces Economic Agency and the Institute of Urban Studies at the University of Winnipeg are organizing seminars across the country on social security reform. The seminars are designed to provide Canadians some of whom are the individuals most affected by social security reform with an opportunity to offer their views. I am pleased to report that some 500 Canadians are taking part in these seminars.

Finally, a series of four policies colloquia will provide an opportunity for experts to brainstorm on some of these options in the areas of lifelong learning, post-secondary education, training and employment development services and child poverty. These colloquia will take place in January 1995 and are being organized by institutes such as Caledon and the Conference Board.

The purpose of these colloquia is to broaden the dialogue on some of the more contentious issues associated with social security reform. These issues are identified in a discussion paper but have not to date been fully addressed in briefs, submissions or other forms of consultation.

As this update illustrates we are serious about consulting with Canadians. The public may be heard through the 1-800 number, the workbook, the standing committee, their MPs at town hall meetings, in consultation seminars and through policy

colloquia. In addition, Canadians are encouraged to write directly to their member of Parliament or to the Minister of Human Resources Development or to fax or send electronic mail to the minister. We want as many Canadians as possible to take part in rebuilding our social security system to meet the needs of Canadians today and into the 21st century.

I want to make a couple of points based on the discussion I heard today from a number of colleagues from across the floor. One of the first speakers today from the Reform Party had indicated they wanted government to say more on this consultation process. The purpose of the consultation is to hear from Canadians and not to bias the discussion in any way, to make sure that the whole process is very transparent and open. We are doing that.

The other comment was that we need to act now and that we do not need to consult any more. I do not believe this type of consultation has happened before. It has never happened before. Government will show leadership by taking action after listening to Canadians. We will be acting in a way that reflects Canadians' concerns.

Another comment made was that taxpayers' money was being spent uselessly. I beg to differ. As I mentioned in my discussion constituents in my riding came out to speak with me. The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development came out to meet with the people of Lincoln to discuss and consult on what the options were. We heard what some of those options were and received feedback from constituents.

● (1820)

I will close by saying that our government will listen and lead. That is the leadership Canadians have asked for and that is the type they will receive from this government.

**Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest, Ref.):** Madam Speaker, it is always a pleasure to rise in the House after listening to the Liberals describe how they have discovered consultation after 125 years of sharing power with the Conservatives. It is long overdue but a very welcome discovery. We would recommend it to them at any time.

It begs the question of course: What were they doing for the previous nine years as they sat in opposition? What were they doing with their red book? It is a good thing it did not take them as long to organize the red book as it has taken them to organize what needs to be done here. It could be that what we have in front of us is a softening up process.

Everyone agrees that changes have to be made. Everyone in the country knows we cannot go on the way we have been and that changes are required and must be made. We all agree on the principle, it is the policies that are going to be a little difficult.