

Supply

country in the world better than this country. All we have to do is work a little harder to make it better.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Ricard (Laval-Ouest): Mr. Speaker, the question raised today must be seen in the context of all the measures taken by the government to help Canadians hit by unemployment. It must also be seen in the more specific context of the current recession, which we will beat by pursuing our programs to help both individuals and communities.

In the present situation, therefore, I believe it is more appropriate to pursue the programs set up several years ago and adapt them to the new philosophies that no longer consider the unemployed to be social outcasts but offer them everything necessary to train for the new labour requirements so as to return as soon as possible to work and dignity.

The globalization of markets, the economic crisis, inflation, the financial constraints affecting governments and the quickening pace of technological development exert pressure on national economies and demand that these economies make remarkable efforts to adapt and be more flexible.

As a government we have put forward policies to meet these challenges. The economic strategies that we have been applying since 1984 favour sustained growth and increased competitiveness.

Since our labour market problems are systemic and not cyclical we must take a longer term approach without overlooking current initiatives. That is what we are doing. Our government has a good job creation record. Since the 1984 election, 1,280,000 jobs have been created. This month there are 934,000 more women in the labour force than in 1984.

We must focus our efforts on labour force efficiency and skills, as well as on workers' ability to adjust to economic, vocational and social changes.

That is the practical approach we have taken over the past two years, beginning with the passage of Bill C-21, when we resolved to make a more dynamic and rational use of unemployment insurance funds. This is an important change which already shows positive results, and we will continue to benefit from it in years to come.

Using the labour force development strategy as a catalyst, we have emphasized three essential aspects of

the working world: labour force efficiency, partnership and consistency in our social policy.

The government has implemented measures to help groups that would not be eligible for the additional training provided through the Unemployment Insurance Plan.

• (1630)

The federal government, the provincial governments, the private sector and workers co-operate more and more as partners to find the best ways to use their common resources. In the working world, this new partnership is a giant step. All concerned will agree that this new climate of co-operation is essential.

Aid will also be given to welfare recipients, native people and the disabled through special measures like "Pathways to Success" for employing and training native people and the national strategy for integration of persons with disabilities. The commitments made in this regard will be respected.

Our goal, I repeat, is to increase the training provided by governments and the private sector. Through the prosperity initiative we will try to upgrade knowledge in Canada. This must be done in partnership with all concerned.

Let me give you two examples of the kind of training that really helps Canadians re-enter the labour force. In Montreal some 400 UI beneficiaries receive training and work experience in bookkeeping and accounting. The placement rates for graduates from that institution is already 75 per cent, which bodes very well for the participant.

In addition, participants do a six-week internship with a local employer and then take part in a two-week job search. That is the kind of effectiveness that we are looking for in developing new programs and adapting our programs to today's realities.

In the new partnership to which we are coming, we must consider training and development as an investment rather than an expense. The public sector must do so and the private sector as well. Investing in human resources is as essential as investing in new technology.

The initiatives now under way in Montreal and Toronto also interest all other regions and communities in Canada. We must come together so that such action is taken in order to make our labour force more competitive and to lead us to prosperity.