

Adjournment Debate

doing the right things to the right people at the right time. This kind of thing is what we are interested in dialoguing on, an evolving evaluation of care, et cetera.

With respect to the issue of women's health, that is of great concern to us. The minister has committed herself to looking at health issues. We have not done enough research and enough work on women's health issues to be able to assess hysterectomies, the validity of them, when they should be done and how often they should be done. We are going on very old data. We need to set up centres of excellence for women, which we are committed to, which will investigate, do the research, get the data and look at the appropriateness of care for women in this country.

I am glad the member asked the question because we believe it is something we need to look at. We have already embarked on the kinds of dialogue we need with the providers and with the provinces to ensure that we provide appropriate care in this country.

• (1840)

[Translation]

YOUTH STRATEGY

Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ): Madam Speaker, on March 30, I asked the Minister of Human Resources Development a question on the effectiveness of his Youth Strategy. Of course, since his answer was not satisfactory and contradicted his own department's assessment of his own program, I would like to get back to this matter. Allow me to reiterate my quotes, taken from page 2-41 of the Estimates for the Department of Human Resources Development.

The first one stated that program evaluations revealed no significant improvements in terms of job opportunities compared to what could have been anticipated without the Youth Strategy program. The second quote, a little further along, indicated that the Canada-New Brunswick Youth Strategy also increased participants' dependency on social assistance. Still further along, the Strategy is described as not obviously affecting dependency on social assistance in Newfoundland. Participants and non-participants alike were more dependent on social assistance after the program. Considerable money was spent.

For example, the Canada-New Brunswick agreement provides that \$120 million will be spent. The Youth Strategy program in Newfoundland will spend \$56.6 million. If I have the time, I would like to give you some statistics for Quebec to show that young people's dependency on social assistance increased not only in New Brunswick and Newfoundland. I will give some statistics for Quebec.

In 1991, Quebec had 116,000 welfare recipients under 30 years of age. In 1995, we now have 140,000 young people on welfare, of whom 74,000 are under 25, if we want to correlate this with the figures from Statistics Canada used by the Department of Human Resources Development. I find it hard to understand, and I hope the parliamentary secretary will be more persuasive than his minister, that although according to a document prepared by the department, an internal assessment of this program shows there has been an increase in the number of young people on welfare, the minister says it is the best program in the world. I find that hard to believe.

There is also the fact that last year, we had cuts in unemployment insurance totalling \$2.5 billion. Bill C-17 increased the waiting period for unemployment insurance benefits, reduced the benefits themselves, and also reduced the benefit period. As a result, there has been a significant increase, in Quebec and other provinces as well, in the number of people who go from unemployment insurance to welfare. The most frequent casualties of this situation are young people, because they have 40 per cent of the insecure jobs in Canada and are the first to be unemployed, and thus the first casualties of cuts in unemployment insurance. Their only alternative is welfare. I wish the parliamentary secretary would be a little more forthcoming than his minister about the assessment of this program.

[English]

Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Human Resources Development, Lib.): Madam Speaker, first I would like to thank the hon. member for the sincerity expressed about young people. I know he is a member who truly cares about young people.

Going back to the original question about the programs in Newfoundland and New Brunswick, he said: "The results were devastating". That is why the Minister of Human Resources Development has decided to discontinue this ineffective initiative and to focus on what really works in this country for young people.

It is also important to remind the hon. member that this initiative dates back to the Conservative years. Our approach toward young people has changed quite drastically to the point at which if we look at budgetary items related to youth employment we have seen an increase over last year even though we must consider our fiscal situation.

The youth internship program is exclusively designed to help young people make the transition from school to work. Over 2,000 young Canadians will have benefited from our sectoral streams. By that I am referring to the programs launched in the environment, in logistics, in Canadian auto repair and services, electronics, electrical, manufacturing, tourism, all jobs with a