

Government Orders

so because of the extra education related expenses associated with special equipment and support services that he requires.

Let us look at Janet from Toronto, a single mother on social assistance who is seeking to improve her life and that of her daughter by enrolling in a part time computer studies program at a local community college. She is willing to invest her time and energy to secure a diploma which she knows will improve her chances for employment and self-sufficiency. Without these grants she may not be able to have the opportunity, because the costs of her tuition and books are well beyond her limited financial needs.

• (2150)

Let us look at Laura from Halifax who has always excelled at science and mathematics right through to the university level. She is hesitant to go further, however, because she will need to borrow a lot more money and she knows the difficulties women face in pursuing non-traditional careers.

It is Canadians such as these who will benefit from what we are proposing under the bill. Members on all sides of the House can undoubtedly provide countless examples of others within their ridings and communities who are seeking to better themselves by taking advantage of education and training opportunities.

For them post-secondary education represents more than a dream. It means a chance to excel and to make a contribution to society. If we support their commitment and their goals now, we and they will reap the benefits in the future, rewards such as better employment prospects, higher paying jobs, reduced dependency on government and greater economic stability for Canada as a whole.

Special opportunity grants will make an important contribution to people who need the support of government the most. After a 10-year freeze in loan limits I believe we can agree that reform in student aid is needed at this time. Let us demonstrate to the Canadian student population that we are aware of their needs and are willing to act. Our investment in this education and training goal will help ensure the economic viability of our country.

We have not just the challenge of making the appropriate amendments, but we have the enormous challenge of abating the cynicism and of abating the negativism that are eating away at the population. We are working hard to restore faith and hope in the Canadian population.

Every step is important. This is one of them. We hope we will receive the co-operation of all hon. members on this very practical step for people who have those specific needs.

Mr. Peter Milliken (Parliamentary Secretary to Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Madam Speaker, I think you would find unanimous consent for the following motion:

That the hon. member for Mercier, the hon. member for Medicine Hat and the hon. member for Lévis be recognized as the next three and final speakers in this debate.

That at the conclusion of the speech of the hon. member for Lévis the question shall be deemed to be put on the motion for third reading, a recorded division shall be deemed to be demanded, and the division would be deferred until Monday, June 20, at 6.30 p.m.

And that the House would continue to sit past the hour of adjournment, if necessary, until the foregoing has been completed.

(Motion agreed to.)

[Translation]

Mrs. Francine Lalonde (Mercier): Madam Speaker, during the time I have, I would like to explain why the Bloc Québécois will vote against this bill. I want to do so particularly because the last member who spoke would have us believe that the government wants this bill passed for noble and admirable reasons and because it will help disabled persons, single parents and women who want to obtain a Ph.D. or to study in non-traditional fields.

I want to say right off that this avowed intention of the government raises an important problem: if you look both at these intentions and the government's budget, you can see there is only a one million dollar difference between last year's expenditures and the planned expenditures for this year.

• (2155)

This means that for the whole of Canada, there is only one million more. One million to be distributed among all students of Canada and one million to reach all those objectives and they say hundreds of thousands of students across Canada are waiting for this House to end its proceedings.

This is all hogwash. The main reason for this bill is quite different. The bill does propose a reform, yes, but a reform with three very specific purposes which, given that we are at the very beginning of this government's mandate, are a warning of things to come in other areas like social program reform.

This bill shows first of all that the government does not respect provincial jurisdictions, that it completely ignores exclusive provincial jurisdiction in the area of education. Secondly, not only does it show an intent, but since the government has the majority it needs to impose its will, the bill also reveals an excessive, immoderate will to centralize. Centralization being immoderate by nature, it is even more so in this case.

Thirdly and finally, whereas historically the right to opt out was unconditional, now if provinces or territories decide not to participate in the national plan, they have to apply national