

Government Orders

training the government can save thousands of dollars in transportation costs to give native people access to the programs because they could receive them in their own communities.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Paul Marchand (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, after listening to the minister, this morning, I really have the feeling that the government wants to opt out of the social programs, which does not come as a surprise to me, since the Liberal government is following in the footsteps of the Conservative Party. It is a well-known fact. For several months now, the media have been telling us that the Liberal government wants to withdraw from social programs, because of a lack of money.

Faced with Canada's enormous deficit, the Liberals want to dump it in the provinces' backyard as much as possible. Besides, it has been estimated that by the year 2000 the federal government will put no money in social programs. That responsibility will be left to the provinces, but the federal government will keep establishing national standards and criteria, which is totally ridiculous.

The federal government is developing standards for all provinces to follow, while it will be the responsibility of the provinces to pay for these programs. That goes to show how ludicrous the present federal system is, so ludicrous in fact that it convinced Quebecers they had to opt out early.

The Deputy Speaker (Mr. Kilgour): I think this comment was not addressed to the hon. member for Athabasca. Is there anyone who wants to ask a question or make a comment about the speech made by the hon. member for Athabasca?

[English]

Mr. Chris Axworthy (Saskatoon—Clark's Crossing): Mr. Speaker, I will try not to play politics here and ask a serious question of the member who spoke for the Reform Party. He and his party have constantly argued that we should cut social spending and do so in the interests of those who are receiving the social programs.

I wonder if I could ask him two questions. How does he explain the fact the cuts under the last government merely increased the demand on both unemployment insurance and social assistance across the country? There were major efforts over the last five years to cut social spending, to cut moneys going to the provinces. All that happened was the number of UI recipients went up. The cost of running the program went up as did social assistance.

• (1220)

Second, what notice is he and his party prepared to take of those groups who represent the poor, the recipients of social programs in moulding the new social programs that we rightfully need in Canada?

Mr. Chatters: Mr. Speaker, the whole thrust of my presentation was not that we must cut social spending, although when 60 per cent of government spending goes to social programs we clearly have to examine the benefit of those programs and assure Canadians that we get real value for every tax dollar spent on social programs.

As I said in my presentation there is a tremendous lack of accountability for dollars spent. In my view a tremendous number of dollars can be saved, or at least greater benefit received by the poorest people in our society, for those dollars spent.

Mr. Darrel Stinson (Okanagan—Shuswap): Mr. Speaker, on the occasion of my first remarks to this House permit me to congratulate you on your election as Deputy Speaker. As a newcomer here I rely on your expertise and your ability.

I also wish to thank the voters of beautiful Okanagan—Shuswap for putting their trust in me to try to represent their needs and hopes in this historic Chamber. I especially want to thank my wife, Cicely, for her unfailing support throughout the election campaign and I know my wife wants to thank the voters for getting me out of her hair.

Okanagan—Shuswap is a mixed rural-urban riding. Our sources of employment are many and varied. Historically our agriculture grew up around ranches producing beef for the Barkerville gold rush along the Hudson Bay fur brigade trails, north from the Columbia River up through the Okanagan Valley and across to Fort Kamloops.

Lord Aberdeen, the Governor General of Canada, and Lady Aberdeen visited their famous Coldstream ranch in Okanagan—Shuswap each fall for many years. Against the advice of their ranch manager who told them to share crop the vast acreage for profit, the Aberdeens decided to sell a portion of it as five-acre plots to Englishmen to come to Canada and grow fruit, thus launching our modern Okanagan fruit producing industry.

The influences and values shown by these pioneers remain strong in Okanagan—Shuswap today; love for our fertile land, being comfortable with hard work, and being willing to sacrifice for an ideal.

Some of these ideals can be seen by the kind of volunteer fund raising in our area in the past two years. For example, the Okanagan Valley, including Salmon Arm, recently raised over \$600,000 for additions to valley wide campuses of Okanagan University. This shows our commitment to higher education.

The area served by the Vernon Jubilee Hospital raised \$760,000 for a CAT scanner and the building to house it to help diagnose serious illnesses. This shows our commitment to excellent health care.

The area in and around our biggest city of Vernon, total service area population of about 56,000, went over their target