

Oral Questions

raised by my friend, we must also admit that there are very encouraging signs for the future of Canada.

[English]

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare.

The Campaign 2000 report card on child poverty which has already been the subject of questions in this House today says with regard to the minister's new program, which includes an earned income supplement, "almost half of all poor families will receive no earning supplement in 1993".

In the light of this fact, how can the minister say that his program is doing anything worth while for poor families? Why will he not do something better to help poor children and their families all across this country?

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, first of all I have not read the report. After I do, it will be easier for me to answer questions.

What I can say, however, is what we have always said about the tax benefit. We give \$500 more per family to low income workers whose earnings average \$10,000 to \$20,000 as compared to those earning \$50,000 to \$60,000 a year. At that level there is a decreasing amount of money.

We continue to give more money than we did before. We consider factors such as the inflation rate, the cost of living and so on. These are applied to all families in Canada. For low income workers, the amount of money available today is greater than it was under the family allowance system.

Hon. Herb Gray (Windsor West): Mr. Speaker, the report also says that "it is estimated that only .7 per cent of single parent families will move above the poverty line due to this benefit in 1993 and only 1.6 per cent of poor couple families will do so".

The report says: "Moreover, these moderate increases will occur only if adequate jobs are available".

In light of the continuing desperately high levels of unemployment, more than 1.5 million people continue out of work and this government has done nothing to

ensure that there will be adequate jobs, why has the government not come forward yet with a program to ensure that all Canadians have the jobs they require to provide a decent standard of living for themselves and their children?

[Translation]

Hon. Benoît Bouchard (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I never said that the program for children replaced the jobs that have always been the first objective for the government and all Canadians. It is very obvious that the government's first objective in our economic policies is to create jobs. These programs that we put in place help to mitigate the problems faced by poor children in particular.

Once again, I quite agree that the job creation efforts made by other departments remain the fundamental response to the problem of child poverty in Canada.

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[English]

MONTREAL

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, almost one in five people in the city of Montreal are out of work. In this year alone 17,000 people have lost their jobs in manufacturing, 10,000 in retail and 9,000 more in the financial sector.

On top of these very sad unemployment statistics, today we learn that the city's bond credit rating has dropped from AA to A-plus.

Montreal is the economic heart and lungs of the province of Quebec. Why did the Minister of Finance let things get to this point and what action plan, if any, does he have to revive the economy of Montreal?

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I understand the difficulties throughout the country. As I said yesterday, the Canadian economy is going through a difficult period because the world economy is going through a difficult period.

Markets are soft. Commodity prices are weak. There is a huge overhang and a burden of debt at the consumer, corporate and government levels. All of these things are having an effect on the slowness of the world economy.