

Supply

We know that partnership with all stakeholders in the economy is the way to go. Last year the steering Group on Prosperity stated in its reports that, and I quote: "Our future prosperity depends on our ability and willingness to draw upon the creative talents of all Canadians. This means becoming an inclusive society, where everyone has a fair opportunity to participate fully and to contribute to the best of his or her ability".

• (1720)

This is much more than a visionary statement. It is a well thought out recognition that if Canadians pull together and believe in one another, we will continue to top United Nations' polls as the greatest country in the world.

The hon. member's motion reflects his concern about Canadian jobs. Perhaps he does not remember the dead-end, make-work projects of the 1970s which did not create jobs but instead increased our debt and ultimately cost us jobs. This government has not continued down that path when it comes to getting workers back to work. We want workers to be able to enjoy a comfortable life and contribute to the growing prosperity of Canada. To that end we have taken a long-term, constructive approach that will produce lasting results.

The Canadian Jobs Strategy created in 1985 emphasized the growing importance of developing workers' skills so they can actually use them in the work place. In the current fiscal year, the Canadian Jobs Strategy budget is a hefty \$1.6 billion.

When the hon. member was writing his motion, did he remember the labour force development strategy that we introduced in 1989? It is a comprehensive strategy that forever abolished useless, dead-end, make-work projects and instead emphasized the importance of investing in the best resource this country has; its people.

That investment must train and upgrade workers' skills and, perhaps most important, it must develop a training culture so that Canadians realize school is not out just because they have left the classroom. Lifelong learning and acquiring higher level skills will be necessary throughout one's entire working life.

Did my hon. friend remember that this government fulfilled its promise to consult with Canadian stakeholders? To ensure that our labour force development strategy is kept on the right track, we brought together representatives of business and labour, educators, trainers, women, aboriginals, persons with disabilities and visible minorities. They are the creative and knowledgeable individuals who make up the Canadian Labour Force Development Board, a body formed in 1991 that has helped us enormously to understand the needs of the private sector and to create programs that will fulfil those needs.

Does the hon. member know that one of the first recommendations made by the Canadian Labour Force Development Board was to substantially increase the use of unemployment insurance for active programming. This idea came from people who work in the community and who fully understand that we must make the unemployed productive members of society again. The unemployed want jobs, not hand-outs.

Did we take that advice? We most certainly did. In 1992 we dedicated \$1.95 billion to unemployment insurance developmental uses. That is, three times more than the 1990 funding for active programs and training for UI claimants. All told this year we are spending around \$21 billion to help unemployed workers.

I trust that my hon. friend knows that Canada's unemployment insurance program is one of the most generous anywhere in the world. It is a significant burden for both workers and employers, and so, this investment must be made wisely and fairly to ensure our future prosperity.

The Canadian Labour Force Development Board has proven to be a positive force in bringing together the diverse economic interests of Canadians. Discussions are now taking place involving the Department of Employment and Immigration, provincial and territorial governments and private sector representatives to increase the number of provincial, territorial and local labour force development boards.

• (1725)

The people who live in a community are the best qualified to know the needs of that community. These local boards will have significant influence over a sub-