

Supply

Furthermore, out of the Consolidated Revenue Fund we will be spending \$1.6 billion on some of those training programs. The challenge, which is one we collectively share as Canadians, is divided among all levels of government. We all know that education and training is a provincial matter in the sense that they are responsible for those institutions.

Through our spending power, yes, we try to help and be helpful and actually at the federal level we spend nationally 73 per cent of all moneys that governments spend for training. It is spent by this department.

The learning component of the prosperity initiative and this private sector group led by Mr. McCamus and Mrs. Marie-Josée Drouin consulted with over 6,000 Canadians in 186 communities, with every business group and union in Canada that were interested in participating and they came up with this plan. One of their recommendations was the electronic highway.

What the hon. member saw in that northern state of the United States of America is exactly what we will be able to do with that infrastructure project which my colleague, the Minister for International Trade and Science and Technology, announced following the December economic statement. That electronic highway will allow us and our partners in the private sector and the provinces to be able to disseminate a lot more skills and knowledge to those displaced workers and to those Canadians who want to acquire the skills and knowledge that will allow them to become active in the labour market.

• (1730)

I think it is a valid point that the hon. member has raised. It is one that we have acted upon and it is one that I will encourage many, many more Canadians to look into. Gone are the days where one level of government some place could fix it. This is a matter for all of us at all levels, and we as Canadians individually—parents, children, educators, leaders in communities—must work together in trying to give us the kind of work force that can succeed in this global economy. These are not buzz words, this is the reality. We must be prepared to do that, and that is what the prosperity action plan calls for, partnerships, which we are encouraging.

I will close on this note. When we look back to December's economic statement and the most recent budget where we announced cuts of \$30 billion over five

years, one department, mine, employment and immigration was not cut in terms of its training budget. Quite to the contrary, in December we increased spending in order to meet that exact challenge that the hon. member has referred to.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa—Vanier): Mr. Speaker, I would have liked to put a question to the minister or comment on his speech, but in any case, I appreciate his supportive comments. He said, in referring to the speech by the hon. member for Acadie—Bathurst, that it was an excellent idea to have the Auditor General of Canada table specific reports in the House, from time to time, so that members would be more aware of the general state of government operations. I agree this is a very good idea. In fact, I introduced a bill in the House about a year and a half ago, which suggests just that.

Now that I have the minister's support, I will try and persuade more ministers to back my proposal. Maybe some day they will do it. I think it would let the Auditor General of Canada do what he is supposed to do, in other words, report from time to time to the House of Commons, as an officer of the House, giving his views on certain developments in the economics of government operations.

Mr. Speaker, we have before us Bill C-134, if I am not mistaken, which proposes to approve some \$161 billion in spending by the government for the coming fiscal year.

On February 25 this year, the Conservative government tabled the Main Estimates, indicating the spending plan for 83 departments and agencies for the 1993-94 fiscal year. This spending plan, based on the economic and fiscal statement made by the Minister of Finance on December 2, will require, as I said earlier, about \$161 billion plus, with the Supplementary Estimates tabled on May 25, another \$414 million, so that the government's total expenditures for the current year add up to \$162 billion, or at least that is what we are being asked to approve today.

Mr. Speaker, prior to concurrence in the House, the Estimates are examined in committee. Spending plans are usually examined by parliamentary committees, and at this important stage, all members, irrespective of their party affiliation, can hold the government accountable to