

S. O. 31

Unfortunately, however, the returns do not measure up. The high school dropout rate stands at 30 per cent and functional illiteracy among adults is equally bad, to state only two examples.

Education is a provincial responsibility in Canada but, jurisdictional sensitivities aside, there is a national interest in nurturing a new culture of learning and in developing co-operative strategies for attaining better educational results. This is a mission to which the government is committed and it is one in which all Canadians will want to join.

* * *

TRUCKING INDUSTRY

Hon. Ralph Ferguson (Lambton—Middlesex): Mr. Speaker, since this government came to power in 1984 it has deregulated the trucking industry in Canada and implemented a free trade agreement. These two moves are systematically destroying the Canadian trucking industry.

Twelve thousand Canadian truckers lost their jobs last year. Others have been losing their trucks and their homes due to United States truckers operating in Canada, yet this government expects them to compete against United States firms whose costs that are about 25 per cent less than those in Canada. Fuel costs are less in the United States, interest rates are lower, repair costs are less, and the trucks themselves cost far less in the United States.

There is no level playing field, and yet this minister stated in the House yesterday that he is waiting for seven studies. Canadian truckers do not need studies; they need action now, government action to save their industry, their jobs and their homes.

* * *

NATIONAL UNITY

Hon. Alan Redway (Don Valley East): Mr. Speaker, when Canadians think of the great national institutions which bind our country together, they think of the CBC, Air Canada and VIA Rail. They seldom, if ever, think of our political parties and their leaders. And yet a national political party and its leader must strive to find policies that will unite as many Canadians as possible by focusing on what we have in common in spite of the language, racial, regional, social and economic differences that often bitterly divide us.

The membership of a truly national party reflects as accurately as possible the demographic composition of our entire country. The compromises made by political parties, frequently considered unprincipled, are usually made in the name of the great principle of Canadian unity.

The truly national political party has been the only effective institution that we have been able to devise so far for overcoming the deep cleavages among us. It is one of Canada's greatest national inventions.

* * *

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Communications remains silent while every Canadian with a telephone has a stake in the enormous corporate showdown for control of our former Crown corporation, the international telephone company, Teleglobe Canada, and its parent, Memotec Data.

To protect consumers from abuse of market power and unfair rate increases, this government in 1987 passed a law preventing Canada's large telephone companies from controlling Teleglobe.

In the interest of Canadian consumers, I ask: Does the government still oppose corporate concentration in this sector? Is the minister the anonymous "government source" who today said that Ottawa would block any changes to Memotec? How is he answering to the BCE chairman who is asking for Ottawa's permission to get his hands on Teleglobe.

While some experts say Teleglobe could fall under control this week without prior CRTC approval as is required by law, we ask: What is the minister doing to see that the letter of the law is respected and followed?

In the interest of every single Canadian who uses a telephone, where does the minister stand? What action is the minister taking to protect a fair telecommunications marketplace?

* * *

NATIONAL UNITY

Mr. Walter Van De Walle (St. Albert): Mr. Speaker, on Sunday, May 5, a crowd of Dutch people gathered at Groesbeek Canadian War Cemetery to pay tribute to those Canadian soldiers who died so that they might be free.