

Adjournment Debate

ISTC played an important role in implementing this program which led to the formation of a non-profit organization under private sector control, with over 100 members from all parts of the biotechnology community in metro Toronto. This program is meant to promote the trade and research position of this leading edge centre in Toronto with the biotechnology industry.

Also, the Federal Business Development Bank is participating actively in some local business development initiatives in this region involving training courses and advisory services adapted to companies' needs. The FBDB, in co-operation with Employment and Immigration, also offers a training program for some unemployment insurance recipients in the Toronto area to help them set up businesses.

The government is also active in the Toronto area in a co-operative venture with the Ontario Department of Industry, Trade and Technology and the FBDB through a program for women entrepreneurs in the region.

I am sure that Toronto's considerable advantages in terms of development, together with this government's programs and services, will help lay the foundation for lasting prosperity in metro Toronto.

[English]

EDUCATION

Mr. Ronald J. Duhamel (St. Boniface): Mr. Speaker, this evening I want to address the questions that were raised in the House of Commons on October 11, which is just a bit more than four months ago. On that particular day I raised two points.

The first one was a reference to the Commission of Inquiry on Canadian University Education which had reported a need to place greater importance on distance education, continuing education and the internationalization of education. It pointed out as well that there was a need to attract students from aboriginal backgrounds and less affluent families, as well as handicapped Canadians and women. My question to the Secretary of State on that particular day was:

How and when will this government act so that we can regain Canada's competitiveness?

I am just going to refer to a brief part of the answer and I want to quote the minister:

I will be reporting back to the House as soon as that review is completed and that should be very shortly.

What does very shortly mean? It is now over four months since I raised that question and received that particular answer.

My supplementary question dealt with the student loans program to help these people that I just identified in getting a post-secondary education. I referred to people with low incomes, to women, to disabled Canadians, and to our aboriginal peoples. I asked why something had not already been done, when it was going to be done, and so on.

The minister, to his credit, indicated that I had already asked the question before and was patient enough to answer again, but he did not say a whole lot more in his other answer than he had previously. He did say, though:

Madam Speaker, I have already answered the hon. member's question more than once. I have told him on many occasions that the Student Loans Program is already 27 years old, has never been changed and needs a thorough going over.

He did say as well that he was very close to tabling a review of the Canada Student Loans Program.

Yet today absolutely nothing has been reported. Why the delay? We are in a country, we all know, that has roughly five million people who are poor and living either at or below the poverty level. Most of them are women and over one million are children. As we speak right now, two million people are receiving social assistance. Almost two million people will be fed at food banks this year. Right now, almost 1.5 million Canadians are unemployed.

This kind of inquiry, this kind of review or study is needed. It addressed a number of important questions. I am still waiting to hear what the government is going to do with it, as well as what it is going to do with the Student Loans Program. I am waiting with bated breath.

• (1820)

[Translation]

Mr. André Plourde (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister for International Trade): Mr. Speaker, I would like to answer the question raised by my colleague from St. Boniface on October 11 concerning post-secondary education in Canada.