

Government Orders

I agree with you that the response by the former Prime Minister—and we can appreciate why she is not the Prime Minister now—felt that there was not enough time during the campaign to talk about what she had to say about the social programs. Probably that was more because she did not have anything to say about the social programs rather than because there was not enough time.

Mrs. Brenda Chamberlain (Guelph—Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased that the member for Hamilton Mountain has placed such an emphasis on youth as well as our studying of the social programs. I think that is very important.

We know our youth has an unemployment rate of about 20 per cent right now and we know that in the future career changes for youth will be four to five significant career changes. These are real career changes. These are not simply moving up the ladder or sideways, or into something a little bit different. This will be totally different career changes.

• (1535)

This is a really different world and we are all very much aware of that. It is absolutely imperative that we look at all groups but youth is our future. That is why I am particularly pleased that the member for Hamilton Mountain did place such an emphasis on youth.

My question has to do with the apprenticeship program that the red book, now famous of course, talks about. We know that an apprenticeship program is extremely positive and it is a good way to go.

It is my belief from the background that I have had it is really important that when we implement an apprenticeship program we bring in all partners: labour, business, industry as well as education.

Therefore I am wondering if the member for Hamilton Mountain could comment on that and the importance of making sure that those groups are not forgotten.

Ms. Phinney: Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is perfectly right.

The apprenticeship programs are very important. We have seen in other countries how much this can contribute to the future of individual youth and also to the country.

One of the problems in the past is that all the people involved in the apprenticeship programs were not consulted, in particular on the needs in a community. Before people were registered in an apprenticeship program or by the time they got through a year and a half of it they realized that they were never going to get a job when they finished the program. They quit and the drop-out rate was about half.

What we are planning to do now is to make sure that those groups, including labour, are consulted and that the courses we

offer for apprenticeship programs will mean that youth afterwards can get a job.

Ms. Hedy Fry (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Health): Mr. Speaker, this is my first time to rise and speak on the floor.

I would like to congratulate you on your appointment. I look forward to working with you. I would like to congratulate everyone here for being elected. Obviously constituents felt that members were worthy of that trust and have sent them here.

I would like to apologize to the members across the floor from the Bloc Quebec for not speaking to them in French. It is a sign of respect. I am afraid I do not have the confidence quite yet to attempt to do it. Never mind, I will be doing it soon.

My riding is Vancouver Centre. I do not want to go into the geographical and regional description of Vancouver Centre. What I want to tell members about Vancouver Centre is that it is a microcosm of Canada.

Vancouver Centre represents on the one hand some of the wealthiest people in this country. On the other hand, it represents people who live in abject poverty in one-room hotels in the middle of the riding. I therefore feel that I can speak with some authority on the problems that we are facing today in terms of our economic and social problems.

The reason I lump both of those into one is that they are not single problems. We cannot in any way remove or separate the problem of economic disorder that we have in our country from the problem of looking at our social programs. They are totally and completely interdependent.

A strong social program—I do not like to use the words safety net—a strong sense of social responsibility is very important if we are to look at economic growth. Unemployment has a major impact on our ability to gain revenue. Unemployment drains our coffers of money that we pay for unemployment insurance.

When unemployment insurance expires, our coffers are further drained by helping people who are on welfare. On the other hand, if we have people working and contributing they contribute to the wealth of this country not only economically but in terms of their self-esteem.

I am a family physician and I have yet to meet, in fact the number of people I know is very small who want to stay on welfare and who want to be unemployed. People want to work. It has everything to do not just with money but with self-esteem, a sense of self-worth and a sense of contributing to the growth and future of our country. This is why we cannot separate these two issues.

I would like to speak to the motion because I believe that the motion made by the hon. Minister of Human Resources Development is a very important one. I do not understand how we