

*Government Orders*

We now find that families in which both the husband and wife work outside the home are nearing 60 per cent of all families in the workforce. There are many latch-key children, youngsters leaving home for school likely with no breakfast, returning home at noon likely with no lunch and coming home after school with no adult to greet them.

This is a very serious problem. I am not questioning the actions of parents. Many families would much sooner have one parent at home. However the reality is that they need two incomes just to keep the family together and to pay the bills. We see many single parent families headed by women. They are growing at an ever increasing rate. We have the highest incidence of low income in this group. The needs of these families are real and great. The demands placed on single parents are even greater.

The schools could have a great deal to do with before and after school programs. The infrastructure and the schools are there. They are heated. We could create programs within the structure to assist parents requiring assistance with their children while they must be at work. What about the children of the next generation? We know that 1.1 million people live in households with social assistance as a way of life. We also know that in March 1993 three million Canadians required social assistance.

• (1950)

This year is significant in that it is the International Year of the Family and the International Year of Indigenous Peoples. For each member of the 35th Parliament, our concerns for these groups are very real and growing. We must address their concerns and we will. For the young, we must address their family needs; for youth, the need for jobs; for seniors, a social safety net whereby they are assured their pensions will not be eroded. We cannot allow the poor and the disadvantaged to go unheard. We must assist.

The payouts for these programs are significant: \$7.4 million in welfare payments. When we take a look at our red book we find that our proposals show a strong desire to return hope for desperation, to remove fear and to provide a decent way of life for Canadians. The challenge is tremendous.

[Translation]

**The Deputy Speaker:** As hon. members are aware, the debate will be extended until 8.52 p.m. Since we have five minutes left for questions and comments, I now recognize the hon. member for Beauharnois—Salaberry.

**Mr. Laurent Lavigne (Beauharnois—Salaberry):** Mr. Speaker, I listened carefully to the comments of the hon. member who just spoke. In his speech, he showed his concern for people who are employed but are afraid of losing their jobs. I

must say I share his concern because we have a plant called Expro which manufactures military equipment. Not so long ago, the plant had 1,000 jobs, and now there are only 400 left.

As part of the pre-budget process we are involved in today, I would like to make a suggestion and also put a question to the previous speaker. Would his government be able to do what was done in the United States by Bill Clinton, who set aside a certain amount of money in the defence budget for reconversion of the defence industry? Now that the cold war is over, we do not need as many plants. Orders are shrinking, and that is what causes lay-offs. In the United States, they set aside a certain amount of money in the defence budget to be invested in converting defence plants to civilian production.

Does the hon. member who just spoke agree with this suggestion? Would he be willing to put this proposal to his government so that we could convert defence plants to civilian use?

[English]

**Mr. Collins:** Mr. Speaker, I respect the question of the hon. member. I feel that he is as competent as I am in making that suggestion to the government. As I see the 35th Parliament, all of us are that government. Each of those suggestions have merit. Why not put it forward? I certainly have no problem with that.

**Mr. Ian McClelland (Edmonton Southwest):** Mr. Speaker, I wish to congratulate the hon. member for an excellent presentation. I am sure many people on this side of the House agreed, as did I, with virtually everything he said. It is probably because he came to the Reform honestly, as did I, except that I attended reform school when I was about 12. That was when I got started in Reform.

I wonder if the member would mind expanding on student loans. This is an extremely important situation facing thousands of graduates who are going into default because they cannot get jobs and therefore cannot pay back their student loans.

I wonder if, from the member's side of the House, he could start to do something and we could carry forward a student loan repayment package, perhaps as promulgated by the Canadian Students Association.

**Mr. Collins:** Mr. Speaker, having a son who went through nine years of university and accumulated well over \$50,000 of debt and happens to live in Alberta, I appreciate what the member is saying. I agree wholeheartedly with him. We have to assist students. We do not want to throttle them so they have no chance of getting a job and repaying their debt. Therefore I support the member wholeheartedly. That is the way we have to go. Otherwise we are going to frustrate young people so that they have no thought about even going into the educational field or any post-secondary field because of the problems they are going to be confronted with.