

Government Orders

Would the hon. member advise me whether he is talking about total private sector investment in the three projects, or is he simply looking for another handout?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guimond: Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member for the Reform Party sees a contradiction between statements by members of the Bloc and what we receive from the federal government, I want to make it clear that every year, Quebecers pay \$28 billion in taxes to Ottawa. I hope that when the federal government invests in Quebec, no one here thinks the government is doing us a favour. It is our money, because we pay \$28 billion in taxes.

As long as we are part of this system, and until such time as Quebecers say they really want to form a country, and in any event, Reform Party members who keep presenting petitions against official languages in Canada won't have a problem any more with what happens in Quebec. Quebec will be a French nation. You won't have to present any more petitions to complain about federal investment in Quebec, because Quebec will manage its own taxes, both federal taxes and provincial taxes.

So there is no contradiction involved in claiming our due while we are part of this system. The federal government is not doing us a favour.

Regarding investments in a high-speed train service, a task force including representatives from the Government of Ontario and the Government of Quebec and chaired by the hon. Rémi Bujold, former M.P. for Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine, has shown that a Quebec-Windsor high-speed train could be 70 per cent financed by the private sector, while the government could inject 30 per cent, which would represent investments totalling about \$2.3 billion. The revenue generated by 120,000 person-years of work during construction and 40,000 person-years when a high-speed train is in operation would total \$1.8 billion, which means that the difference between \$2.3 billion and what the federal government would contribute with \$1.8 billion in tax revenues would be \$500 million.

We voted in favour of a project worth several billion dollars to build a fixed link between Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick, because we felt it was a good project. We are convinced that if this proposal is debated in this House, a project that would create jobs, export technology, and nevertheless have a limited impact on the public purse, with 70 per cent participation by the private sector, it would be a very attractive proposition for Canada and Quebec.

• (1715)

[*English*]

Mr. Dennis J. Mills (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin my remarks by—

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Speaker: I apologize for interrupting the hon. member but, before I give him the floor, it is my duty, pursuant to Standing Order 38, to inform the House that the question to be raised tonight at the time of the adjournment is as follows: the hon. member for Laurier—Sainte-Marie—Average income of Francophones.

My apologies to the hon. member for Broadview—Greenwood. Resuming debate.

[*English*]

Mr. Mills: Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin my remarks by continuing on the theme that the member for the Reform Party discussed. It had to do with the contradiction of the Bloc Quebecois coming into the House and constantly talking about separation, yet at the same time asking for more support for megaprojects.

I have absolutely no problem with the members from Quebec fighting for their constituents, for their community and for projects that will help revitalize the city of Montreal and the province of Quebec. If we can get the economies of Montreal and Toronto going again it will go a long way in affecting all parts of the country.

What bothers me is the fact that the members from the Bloc never talk about the announcement that the Minister of Finance made on January 21 when he stated the terms of the five year equalization renewal, the equalization entitlement. As you know, Mr. Speaker, because of our Constitution we have an equalization formula. It is a complex formula where the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario, which are the wealthier provinces, are contributing to those provinces in our Confederation that do not have the same resources.

On January 21 the Minister of Finance announced a \$70 billion package for the province of Quebec. Over the next five years there will be a transfer of funds that will go to the province of Quebec, unfettered, no strings attached. I have yet to hear a member of the Bloc acknowledge that the \$70 billion transfer under the equalization entitlement to the people of Quebec is a good thing. They seem to pretend it is not happening, that it does not go on.

I am not begrudging this transfer in any way. It is part of our contract to keep Confederation together. But when they stand in the House and talk about some of the difficulties we are having collectively in trying to get our economy going again, I wish in fairness that they would acknowledge the fact that for the last five years on equalization the province of Quebec received \$50.2 billion and for the next five years it will receive an additional \$70 billion.

The people in my community in Toronto cannot figure out transferring \$130 billion to a community that is talking about separation. I am waiting for the day when the Bloc members start speaking publicly about the equalization entitlements and