

control mechanisms, while allowing some room to manoeuvre. Could the Minister explain what kind of national criteria he has in mind for controlling costs while still allowing third parties some room to manoeuvre?

[English]

Mr. Eggleton: Mr. Speaker, this program is a co-operative program with three levels of government. Each project will require each level of government to sign off on it.

Each level of government has a responsibility also to ensure that the taxpayer's dollar is well spent. I do not think any level of government wants to get into a situation of cost overruns. We want to make sure that there are cost control mechanisms in place. Each level of government has internal auditing procedures and controllership procedures that help to ensure that the best cost estimates are being put forward.

We will have a still further look at it even though the provincial and municipal governments with their very restrained budgets are going to want to make sure that those costs are as accurate as they can be. We are going to want to make sure as well because I want this program to be carried out in an efficient and effective manner. I want it to produce good results. I do not want people to have to face a situation where there are going to be cost overruns.

We will look at cost controls and cost benefits, understanding the benefits that come out at the end of the day. One of the things we said in the red book was that we want to know what these programs produce. What are the results? What are they really going to do for Canadians in the short and long term? Those kinds of evaluations are also part and parcel of what we will be looking at.

Three orders of government will be working together, giving consideration to the fiscal constraints we find ourselves in and the very serious nature of how the taxpayer's dollar is used.

● (1030)

[Translation]

Mr. Philippe Paré (Louis-Hébert): Mr. Speaker, as this is my maiden speech, I would like to begin by saying a few words about my riding of Louis-Hébert. It includes three lovely suburban municipalities in the Quebec City area, namely Cap-Rouge, Sainte-Foy and Sillery, located on the shores of the St. Lawrence.

I listened closely to the remarks of the hon. member for York Centre concerning the infrastructure program and I would like to make a few comments. My first concerns the spirit of co-operation to which the Minister referred. I am very happy that the federal, provincial and municipal governments are co-operating.

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This is good to see, except that given the current situation, it illustrates the weak position of the federal government, in view of the size of the debt and runaway government expenses. When the federal government wants to carry out a project, it must work side by side with the municipalities—which in itself is a good thing—and with the provinces. This only reflects the serious state of the government's finances.

The hon. member for York Centre indicated—and I am happy to hear it—that this is not the only job creation program. We will, however, be paying close attention to concrete programs announced later.

The Minister said that the infrastructure program will kick-start the economy. Economic recovery will be difficult, if not impossible, until such time as the government takes serious, radical steps to slash government spending. And there is nothing in the throne speech to indicate that the government intends to take this kind of action.

[English]

Mr. Eggleton: Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his intervention. I would quickly point out that this is a great example of bringing three levels of government to work together. Is it not about time that we did that rather than have the duplications? We may have three levels of government but we have one taxpayer and that taxpayer wants to make sure we are spending his or her money efficiently and effectively.

That taxpayer is also concerned about government expenditure. Indeed, that is an issue that is also being addressed by the Minister of Finance, by me and by my colleagues in the cabinet and will of course be addressed in the federal budget when it is brought forward.

However, at this point in time we are entering into a program that is unprecedented in terms of the co-operation. It is also a program that is based on local priorities and the need to keep our communities safe and liveable, have the kind of infrastructure to enjoy a quality of life that has been traditionally held dear and which will attract additional investment to improve their economic growth.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, I would like to start by taking this opportunity to congratulate all my colleagues who were elected to the House of Commons on October 25, in an election which must be seen as crucial for the future of Quebec and that of Canada without Quebec.

I also take this opportunity to thank the constituents of the great riding of Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot, the Quebec agri-food technicity, for the trust they have shown in me by giving me a clear dual mandate: first, to fight most vigorously to protect their interests and those of Quebec as a whole and, second, to pave the way for Quebec to attain full sovereignty to put to rest once and for all the constitutional issue.