

However, with the Conservative Government, we are used to reversals. In April, only two months after this first statement, Mr. Bouchard had changed his mind, and I now quote from an interview he gave to the newspaper *La Presse* in which he said:

The federal Government has a role to play in education which is more important than simply providing money to the provinces without checking where this money goes—

It now seems that the federal Government has something to say. However, Mr. Bouchard is still not willing to take his responsibilities. He said the following:

Faced with the increasing complaints of students, rectors, college and university professors—on some days, he thinks he might lose patience—if Prime Minister Mulroney agreed, he would initiate a lively debate with the provinces which could cause frictions.

Here, Mr. Speaker, we have a good example of leadership of the kind our Prime Minister likes. Peace at all costs. The future of Canadians and our young people is being mortgaged, but it does not matter as long as there is no conflict. This is easy to achieve. We just have to give everything and ask for nothing in return. There, Mr. Speaker, is the Conservative education policy: no national objective, nothing to say about the national interest, nothing to say about strategic research, nothing to say about the need to develop a strategic manpower, no questions asked. At the same time, the students are asking for grants and low interest loans to continue their studies, but this does not really concern this Government. It does not really concern our Prime Minister. As we saw in the Stevens affair, Mr. Speaker, this Government has other priorities.

• (1340)

[English]

Come to think of it, education should be the only area where an interest-free loan makes money. I see things very differently. The future of our country will be determined by our population, by our people.

Education is the key to economic development. We must invest in education in all its shapes and forms. I am speaking not only about university education, college education, post-secondary education, but also lifelong education, adult education. Several years ago, the task force on skill development leave recommended that all workers have a legislated right to paid educational leave for which they could earn time off from work for purposes of training, or upgrading their skills. This educational leave could be accumulated, and suggestions have been made that such leave could be accumulated at the rate of one day of leave for every 30 days worked, so that after 10 years in the labour force, a person would perhaps have accumulated a year of educational leave. University professors have sabbaticals. Why not all workers?

[Translation]

In Quebec, the Jean Commission which has addressed the issue of adult education has found out that in spite of the benefits of educational reform, and today we cannot deny the fact that all children from 5 to 15 years of age are attending

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primary school and high school, that many problems still exist, such as failures, drop-outs and maladjustment. The democratization of education, Mr. Speaker, has frequently been more beneficial to middle and upper classes than to the lower classes.

And to solve those problems, the Jean Commission made several recommendations and I will mention the following one today: That any adult be guaranteed the equivalent of 13 years of schooling acquired in the class-room or elsewhere in the usual manner or otherwise.

Mr. Speaker, the idea is to provide all adults with the opportunity of completing their schooling in terms of the present needs of the labour market. If someone decides to quit school in Grade 10 or 9, that person could complete his or her thirteen years of training, the four or five years he or she has missed, a little later either at 25 or 30 years of age. And the governments have a role to play in helping people attain their full capabilities through education, by providing them with the necessary income while he is studying and allowing them to attend the courses in which they are interested either on the job or in an educational institution.

[English]

Mr. Speaker, the national interest in education is evident.

[Translation]

National interest is self-evident to everyone except to this Government. Any self-respecting national government must have a concern for it. But with this Government, all we have is set-backs. What we have is a Government that washes its hands of post-secondary education, and we have seen very little initiative in the area of adult education.

In conclusion, I suggest that this nation perhaps did not realize the stakes, because of our abundant national resources. Some people even suggest the curse of our national resources, Mr. Speaker—

[English]

I have recently heard people who speak of the curse of our wealthy natural resources. Other countries have not had such plentiful natural resources and have had to learn about the need to invest in human resources. The Japanese are perhaps the best example.

[Translation]

If our elders, Mr. Speaker, and I would conclude on that, were unable to identify the situation, if some awareness is to be gained, the young are well placed to start the process. They are in school, they know about over-populated classrooms, they have to work with obsolete equipment.

There are two things that the young must do in this country: First, get the best possible education, and second, speak loud enough so that governments will provide the kind of education that will provide for tomorrow's needs.