

Government Orders

get tight they cut back on expenditures on hard services such as sewage, roads and what have you.

I mention this because at those two levels of government you have different mandates. The regional government has no option. It has to provide 20 per cent of the welfare costs. The municipal government does not have to do it so it can plan much better within the terms of its fiscal realities.

Debates at the local level tend to bring together the collective wisdom from different frames of reference in a non-partisan fashion on to the issue. We really try to accomplish what we believe is the best for the ratepayers of our municipalities.

I do not find the same level of co-operation in the House. It seems to me that the job of the governing party, of which I am a member, is to put forward programs and the job of the opposition is to oppose it. Whether it is consistent in its opposition really does not matter very much.

I can talk about some parts of the debate where arguments came from every different angle. We have had the Bloc say that the government should not be looking at social programs, it should not be looking at health care programs, let us keep the status quo because somehow it has served us well.

The Bloc even went further and said that we did not talk about the reform of social programs or the reform of the health care system prior to the election. We did. We talked about reforming health care and there were very good reasons for it. The reasons are the way our health care expenditures have been going. We cannot just keep throwing money at a very necessary service but one that needs to undergo fundamental reform.

If you can practise preventive health care you are going to save billions and billions of dollars in terms of providing the level of service to the Canadian public that they have come to expect.

Another nice thing about it is that by doing preventive health care we also have the opportunity of having a healthier public. One of the problems we have had in the health care system is that it has been sort of a crisis care, when you get sick you go to the doctor. If you look at the mortality rate over the last 100 years, the reality is that it was not the medical profession that cut it back so drastically. It was the civil engineer who was able to provide safe, wholesome water. It has been our ability to handle waste that has made the greatest impact on health care, as well as the medical officers of health. They have been the ones who have been working on health care in the preventive sense.

• (1625)

Now we are looking to see if something better can be done to make better use of the dollars we have. I think that is very important. We know social services have become very expen-

sive and that is the reason we are having the social services review.

One thing I would stress when we examine the whole issue of social services is that the Canadian public wants a safety net to catch people at a time when they might be totally disabled and we expect to support them for the long term. Certainly if they become unemployed they want us to support them in a new emerging economy where training, retraining and education become very strong components and pillars of our whole economic system.

The expectations are in the long term that no longer can people work for one company for 25, 30, 35, 40 or 50 years. The chances are they are going to be moving on to a number of different jobs. As firms get smaller they are getting smarter. They are better at responding to economic conditions. Those are going to be the major employers and the creators of new jobs.

The budget recognizes this and deals with it when it says that 85 per cent of the new jobs are going to be created by small and medium sized businesses.

When I talk about small and medium sized businesses I speak for the federal riding of Waterloo which is really one of the leaders in the new economy that has emerged. It is exciting but it also takes a lot of work trying to keep up with the changes that are taking place and watching the new emerging technologies.

Sunday evening I spoke with a gentleman from Elmira from Brubacher Technologies whose family for generations has been involved in shoe repair and building shoes. Now his company is going to be getting into the high tech production of orthopaedic shoes. Why is it exciting? It is exciting because at the present time it might take his company 40 to 60 hours to make one shoe and now because of high tech he is going to be able to do it in 40 to 60 minutes. His business is a world leader in this area.

Many other companies are leaders in the high tech field. We recently had a software firm which sold for \$100 million. It was developed by a number of university professors and it had a number of university students involved with it. That is not a bad sum of money when you think about it. However, the sad part is that the new owners are American.

The challenge for us is to somehow create a climate where those businesses which are on the verge of becoming big businesses will stay in this country.

I mentioned that I found the debate to be not very consistent on different levels. When I was looking through my *Quorum* today, as I am sure everybody else has, I came up with a story from the Vancouver *Sun* authored by Barbara Yaffe. She asks: "Do we need more MPs? Let's look at the cost". I know that the Reform Party is very strong in its opposition to us looking at the whole question of the boundaries.