

Government Orders

We in the Reform Party are trying to say that people who are sick are not obtaining services in a timely fashion. Let us recognize that. Let us do something about that with the amount of funds we have now.

Mr. Bernie Collins (Souris—Moose Mountain): Mr. Speaker, this evening I had the pleasure to listen to members of the Reform, the Bloc and the Liberal parties put forward their presentations. It is refreshing that people have come here with an honest concern for considering the social aspects of the society in which we live.

I have had experiences working for three years in a boys' school that I will likely never forget. I guess another name for it would be reform school. Hon. members would like me to recognize the school was for wayward people who were to be straightened around. I did not want to tell them but it is true.

One young fellow who was there while I worked there ran away to his home in North Battleford. He visited me while I was attending university. He wanted to know what he should do. We sat there for two hours, at the end of which time I said: "Make up your mind. If you want to go back I will take you back". He decided to go back and serve his time, which he did.

On returning to the institution one of the people working there called him a stupid so-and-so and said: "What are you doing back here? Why didn't you keep running?" Those were the people who were looking after him. Those were the people we entrusted with our young people.

As I travelled to Moose Mountain after the election I picked up a young fellow in Grenfell, Saskatchewan. He was from Richmond, B.C. He was 18 years old and did not even have a grade nine education. He was going to Winnipeg to get a job as a salesman. Now it is true some people would say that is fantastic. I tried to encourage him to go back home to his parents and improve his education. I hope he does.

I bring before us these analogies of the problems that face us all. We elected four Liberals from Saskatchewan. They wanted to make sure there was a balance so they put a teacher on the ballot. I know that one of those four, a fellow member, is a lawyer. He feels there is an equal balance now: three lawyers and one teacher.

With regard to human resource development we are honoured to have the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre as minister in charge. My constituents have made clear in many meetings and discussions that they have many concerns regarding our social programs, a fundamental part of our country that requires review.

On the issue of fiscal relations and federal spending power, concern revolves around our ability to form a partnership of fiscal cohesion throughout the country to deliver social pro-

grams. When one considers that federal spending on social programs is between \$70 billion and \$80 billion annually, which equals as much as two-thirds of program spending at the federal level, there is a level of dissatisfaction among the voters of Souris—Moose Mountain over the manner in which our social programs are structured. I would like for a moment to discuss some of the needs we see in regard to the Unemployment Insurance Commission programs. We feel we need to move toward a level of maximum payout so that there is a ceiling on earnings one can make during a year in order to be beneficiary of UIC. In my opinion seasonal jobs which continue to require a payout year after year need to be reviewed. We cannot constantly require a higher contribution from both employer and employee in particular seasonal occupations.

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Also we have to allocate earnings more effectively to those who are receiving unemployment so they can be actively doing something, performing some type of work or receiving some form of education during the period between jobs. If we can improve their educational background we can provide them with the additional incentive to be able to enter the workforce in a productive nature.

As well, we have to encourage employers to retain staff so if they wish to downsize they do it through natural attrition rather than make thousands of Canadians face job loss and uncertainty. Nowhere in the history of Canada have we seen so many people going to work day after day fearful of losing their jobs.

I would like to highlight those students completing degrees and looking to go into the workforce but are unable to find work. They should have an opportunity to work as assistants to senior people in their chosen fields. This would help them gain some credibility and obtain a work record. This would also help them to enter into the job placement process.

I would like to address a concern of mine regarding education and young people receiving assistance in the form of student loans. We have to ensure that their expectations in terms of paying back their loans are reasonable. We must frame it in a manner in which repayment of the loans is reasonable and they have some certainty of a place in the job market when they have completed their degree. As well interest rates must reflect the ability of young people to pay. If we want our young people to be educated and our human resources to be competitive restructuring of the student loan program is essential.

When we review social security programs some very serious facts need to be addressed. My riding includes seven First Nations bands. I know their hopes and aspirations. They hope for recognition as a First Nation and for self-government. They too search out in hope for the best for their families.