

*Government Orders*

**Mr. White (Fraser Valley West):** The Liberals have made no changes to the budget. In fact they have increased it, so this is the track we are going on.

I will just run by a couple more because there are so many of them. Let me give members the one that might interest a lot of people. There is \$21,566 to examine experimental studies of interactive gestures. Let members' minds roll a bit on that one.

I am sorry I am going to run out of time because I do have a bunch of other things to talk about. If members want to look on the bigger scale of things, here is a government that is talking about spending \$6 billion of taxpayers' money on infrastructure, another \$1.5 billion on child care seats and so on. It is all taxpayers' money. There have been no cuts to the budget. It is a disgrace to put this in front of the people of Canada.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm):** Madam Speaker, to start with I would like to tell the member for Saint-Laurent—Cartierville how pleased I was to meet her in my riding before the Easter break, for the handing out of a cheque. I hope that the day I run into difficulties, I will be able to count on the government to help me out. I will be happy to meet you in my riding for less auspicious events than the handing out of a cheque. Madam Speaker, I mean that in a very friendly way.

Having said that, I welcome this opportunity to speak to Bill C-17, an Act to amend certain statutes to implement certain provisions of the Budget tabled in Parliament on February 22, 1994. Under this rather innocuous title, this act has far reaching consequences for nearly everyone in Canada and in Quebec. This bill affects every household, every family and every taxpayer in the country.

When reading this piece of legislation, one can really see how thirsty the government is for money. There is a problem however, the government always digs into the same pockets to take the money it needs. This time, once again, it goes after the unemployed and pensioners and, as I said before, families, more often than not low-income families who can hardly make ends meet as it is.

I think that instead of bringing the unemployed to their knees, the government should have helped them break out of that vicious circle and get back onto the labour market. You do not keep on hitting somebody who has already fallen to the ground, you help him get up. One way to help the unemployed is to agree to Quebec's many requests to decentralize manpower training. This would improve efficiency and help unemployed workers find their way through a maze of 75 programs with different entrance requirements depending on whether they deal with the federal government or Quebec departments. It would also help reduce the cost of overlapping jurisdiction and duplication which is estimated to be around \$300,000 in Quebec alone. This figure was not arrived at by the Bloc Québécois but by a former Quebec minister, a former minister who was a Liberal and a

federalist. Three hundred million dollars because of overlapping is not chicken feed, it is a lot of money.

It is mostly because it has been recognized that a greater decentralization, bringing training and re-entry programs closer to the labour force, was more efficient than a strongly centralized policy such as the approach the Canadian government wants to impose on the provinces that the government must meet our expectations regarding manpower training.

According to Statistics Canada and other government bodies such as the Department of Employment and Immigration, each year, there are between 50,000 and 90,000 jobs that go unfilled in Quebec alone. With these figures, it is possible to see that there is a problem with training. Based on these figures alone, in difficult times such as these when everyone is looking for a job and talking about jobs, the need to do something is obvious to anyone who takes a hard look at the situation. In spite of all that, and in spite of the fact that the decentralization of training is unanimously approved in Quebec, we continue to negotiate, to hesitate and to waver, not knowing exactly what to do. As the hon. member for Roberval said yesterday, we discuss and these friendly discussions go on and on between Quebec and Ottawa, but no decision is ever made. I hope that the future will be more promising. I hope that the powers that be in Quebec will wake up and put their foot down once and for all.

● (1550)

Yesterday too, the Leader of the Opposition was right on when he said that in Quebec the issue of training decentralization generates a rare consensus. Indeed, it is not often that you have Gérald Larose and Ghislain Dufour agreeing on something. There is a real consensus and Quebec's position is very clear.

We can never insist too much on the fact that the Martin budget taxes employment and jeopardizes an already weak recovery.

The minister who, not so long ago, so vehemently opposed the Conservative policy, is now pursuing that policy and is doing even more damage than the Conservatives before him. Indeed, the minister pursues the Conservative policy of lowering UI benefits for the vast majority of claimants. To ease its conscience, the government threw in a few goodies in the bill, including the provision concerning low-income earners with dependent children. This is nothing to write home about, but the government put that in the legislation to make it somewhat more palatable. But this is only to save face; this is only to create a diversion.

This policy shifts the emphasis of the problem and makes it worse. I represent the riding of Berthier—Montcalm which extends to Saint-Michel-des-Saints, Saint-Zénon and all the way up to the Indian reserve of Manouane. What did people tell me every time I visited those regions during the election campaign? They said: "Michel, is there a policy to help our young stay here in our regions?" I understand these people because the population of these communities and villages is