

Supply

[*Translation*]

The federal Government plays a very active role in this respect because it sees itself as a partner in supporting post-secondary education, and as such, it pursues the following objectives: to encourage institutions to offer programs and services that are in line with broad national objectives such as official languages, multiculturalism and promoting the status of women; to provide financial assistance to the provinces through the established programs financing system, enabling them to provide accessible and high quality post-secondary education; to provide financial assistance for research and development; and finally, to fulfil its own constitutional obligations with respect to the education of Native peoples, armed forces personnel and other specific groups.

In line with these broad national objectives, the Government, as I said earlier, maintains its focus on excellence and equality of opportunity.

I am sure Hon. Members will understand that, for the sake of Canada's future, we must do everything we can to help our colleges and universities aim for excellence in education. The future of our country is at stake, if we want to keep up with an increasingly competitive world.

Making post-secondary education accessible should also remain one of our major concerns. We already have one of the most open and most accessible systems in the world, and we must maintain our emphasis on equality of opportunity.

[*English*]

Let me outline some of the achievements of the Government in the field of post-secondary education over the past two years. We held the first national forum on post-secondary education, an historic collaboration of federal and provincial Governments with universities, colleges, the private sector and other interests. We organized, under the sponsorship of the Prime Minister the first national conference on technology and innovation, much of which was focused on the contribution of higher education and university research to Canada's competitiveness.

The Canada Scholarships Program has been introduced to encourage 2,500 of our brightest young men and women to enter science or engineering each year. The Centres of Excellence program will provide \$240 million to support projects that will enhance our ability

to compete internationally. Doubling the number of CIDA sponsored students and trainees will benefit both our own higher education system and the countries which receive our aid. Our support for a French language college in Ontario and le collège de l'Acadie in Nova Scotia will improve opportunities for francophones outside Quebec to study in their own language at the post-secondary level.

These examples show that the Government is already fully committed to supporting post-secondary education for Canada's future. Let me now turn to the Government's commitment to tackling the problem of illiteracy.

Illiteracy is a national problem. In every town and village, every region and district, every city and metropolitan area in Canada, there are men and women who cannot function in everyday life because they cannot read and write. Two years ago, Southam News commissioned a survey which revealed for the first time the full extent of illiteracy in Canada. I remember being shocked by the survey's findings. I know every Member of this House was equally shocked, equally dismayed and equally determined to end illiteracy.

[*Translation*]

Illiteracy is expensive! According to a study by a business task force, it causes annual losses of around \$4 billion in the private sector and \$10 billion in Canadian society as a whole.

However, the cost is highest at the personal level: there are men and women who cannot read the newspaper or make sense of the bus timetable; they cannot take a full and active part in community life.

[*English*]

The road to literacy is one shared by all of us. The road to literacy is not followed exclusively by one level of Government. It is not followed by one political Party. It is not followed by the private sector alone. It is a road of partnership, of shared effort and of shared energy.

On September 8, 1988 we announced that the federal Government would be one partner among many in the journey on the road to literacy and we are working with many partners. Two weeks ago, the Government of the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador said in its Speech from the Throne that it was committing greater provincial resources to literacy. Advisory councils and task forces have been set up in Nova Scotia, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia to work with the provincial Governments on literacy. Ontario, New