

Government Orders

worked very hard for one, two or even three years were penalized, because if they wanted to continue later on, they would have to pay for the courses themselves.

Now this is an incredible example. It is inhumane, when you consider the time and effort involved. I would like to ask the hon. member who is an experienced politician whether as a member from Quebec, he intends to work on this issue and ensure that manpower training is transferred to Quebec as soon as possible, so that Quebecers can take their courses and keep their dignity as human beings and also save some money. The duplication and inconsistencies make this system truly inhumane. Does the hon. member, as a member from Quebec, intend to ensure this problem is dealt with once and for all?

• (1025)

[English]

Mr. Allmand: Mr. Speaker, I fully agree with the hon. member that there are provisions now in the Unemployment Insurance Act that are ridiculous and have to be changed.

One of them is the provision that we had historically that one had to be ready and available for work at all times in order to collect benefits. That meant that somebody who took a course was not ready and available for work because they were studying during the day. Those studies were essential in my view and in the view of many people to prepare that person for a job.

There were amendments a few years ago that allowed people to do study programs while they were on unemployment insurance but unfortunately one needs the permission of the unemployment insurance officials to do that. That permission is not always given. In my view it should be almost automatic.

I also said in my remarks that I am fully in agreement with taking steps to eliminate duplication between the provincial programs and the federal programs to get rid of waste in the delivery systems and so on. I would hope as a Quebecer that we could reach an agreement between Quebec and Ottawa to eliminate the inconsistencies between the federal unemployment insurance program and the provincial welfare system.

The elimination of the duplication is essential. The provinces should have prior jurisdiction in matters of education and training. That was the position put forward in the Charlottetown accord. Consequently we have to work out agreements that will satisfy the provinces in this matter and stop the fighting between the federal and provincial levels. We have to make sure that we have programs that are efficient and meet the situation that was put forward by my good friend from Longueuil.

Mrs. Sharon Hayes (Port Moody—Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, on behalf of our caucus co-ordinator I would like to advise the House that our party will be dividing the speaking time in accordance with Standing Order 43.

It is with a great deal of pride that I stand to give my first address here today as I join with my fellow MPs in this place of history and decision. This country, of which we are proud citizens, has given to us the responsibility to guide the direction of the ship of state in the next several years. The responsibility is awesome indeed. There are many potential dangers ahead in the presence of existing cracks in our vessel. Each of us in this Chamber will play a role in the challenging task to bring Canada to its port of safety.

It is my honour to have been elected to serve the people of Port Moody—Coquitlam. On the north side of the Fraser River on the outskirts of Vancouver we enjoy the beauty of the mountains and the temperate climate of the west coast.

As one of the fastest growing districts in Canada we are blessed with five thriving communities. Families from all nationalities and backgrounds have chosen to call this area their home. With its central location in the beautiful Fraser Valley so much of the employment and customer pool of this lower mainland is within easy reach. Originally containing the western terminus of the rail line in Port Moody, we now host a myriad of small businesses complimented by a busy port and rail connections.

I must pause and thank my family for its part in allowing me to take this responsibility. I have always made my husband and my two girls a very real priority and it was a concern for them that crystallized my political choices. As I am sure every MP can already testify, this task that we are taking on demands sacrifices of both time and energy. Doug, Carolyn and Kathy, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart for your love, support and understanding.

A sincere thanks to all those who voted for me. A special thank you to those who worked so hard in my campaign leading up to the election.

It is especially important to me to recognize that it is the people of Port Moody and Coquitlam who sent me here to represent them regardless of political stripe. I will honour the trust they have given to me, an ordinary citizen, to be their eyes and ears here in Ottawa and I will speak out for them on issues that affect their homes and our community.

The people of Port Moody—Coquitlam have told me that our country needs healing. Canada is critically ill with a half trillion dollar federal debt.

• (1030)

This one fact alone dictates the treatment for so many of its other complications. Where are the sore spots? Government policies are affecting the people I represent in real ways. It is not ink on a line, it is people and their families in their daily lives, their ability to find work, their sense of security, their openness