

Supply

Governments have a responsibility to help in the transition to the new economy or to be left to cope with intractable unemployment and the needs of citizens with declining incomes.

As outlined in the speech from the throne, this government intends to pursue an active program for the growing economy, focusing on small and medium sized businesses as the engine for longer term job creation.

The government will work with financial institutions to improve access to capital for small business. A Canada investment fund will be created to help innovative leading edge technology firms to obtain the long term capital they need. A Canadian technology network will be created to improve the diffusion of technology and innovation.

The government will encourage technology partnerships between Canadian universities, research institutions and the private sector. The government will also implement a Canadian strategy for an information highway. The government will promote better training for the managers of small businesses and greater access to strategic information on new marketing opportunities. The government will work with the provinces to reduce the regulatory and paper burden on small businesses and to streamline the delivery of these programs.

Competing successfully in the emerging global economy will also require an investment in our own people. The government will work in partnership with the provinces and the private sector to help young people better prepare for the transition from school to the work place.

It will propose measures to improve job training as well as the literacy skills of Canadians with funding for the national literacy program restored to its original level.

I acknowledge that many of the initiatives aforementioned will require the government to act in partnership with provinces to be fully successful. This can be an advantage for these initiatives rather than a hindrance.

The government has shown through the infrastructure program that governments acting together can make advances that would be beyond the capacity of any one level of government working alone.

The challenges facing us as we adapt to economic globalization will require co-operation among governments in designing and delivering programs. Our task is to ensure that they are the right programs, effective and efficient, and that the government's spending is effective and efficient. Anything less jeopardizes our future as Canadians and our future as a country.

Mr. John English (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs): Mr. Speaker, the motion we are

discussing today reflects the fact that many Canadians are concerned that governments are inefficient, unresponsive and too costly.

It is not simply Canadians who are concerned. Australians, Britons, Americans and Germans are now looking at government and those same kinds of complaints.

This government has decided in light of these concerns that the time has come for decisive action. In the speech from the throne it was said it will be the policy of the government to seek to clarify the federal government's responsibilities in relation to other orders of government, to eliminate overlap and duplication and to find better ways to provide services so that they represent the best value for taxpayers' dollars and respond to the real needs of people.

At the first minister's meeting on December 21, 1993 the first ministers agreed to give priority to efforts to improve the efficiency of the federation. In this regard, in responding to comments made earlier by the member for Fraser Valley East, PS 2000 to which he referred has in fact one progress report and another progress report is being prepared. The responsibility for renewal of the public service, as he indicated, is the responsibility of the government and of course the members of the House. I welcome his remark that he does believe that civil servants acting effectively can carry out the mandate under PS 2000 with the direction of course being given by the government.

• (1605)

The shared commitment to change which emerged from the first ministers meeting is evidence of a flexible adaptable federal system, one that is based on sound principles and offers both long-term stability and the capacity to evolve. That evolution can come through reasoned discussion as needs and priorities change.

To meet these ends the Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs has written to the premiers and to territorial government leaders to launch the process of eliminating overlap and duplication as is suggested in the motion today. The overlap, duplication and delivery of federal and provincial government programs and services is of major importance to this government.

The process being undertaken aims to, first, clarify federal-provincial roles and responsibilities to ensure that limited public resources are used to provide necessary services in an efficient way; second, to ensure public service activities facilitate economic investment and growth; and, third, to redesign programs and services to achieve more efficient delivery and greater client orientation. This morning the member for Ottawa West talked in a very fascinating way about changes that are coming in the area of telecommunications that offers such prospects as 24-hour service.