

*Private Members' Business*

that is before us I am afraid I must disagree with him. Therefore, I rise.

He made the point, I thought eloquently, of the need for a better blueprint for training our workers for a prescription for the future where we were going to have high-tech needs and the need to be more competitive in the global economy. He was, in fact, almost directly citing every single bank report one reads today. To get that from the hon. member for Essex—Windsor, it was gratifying to hear that understanding of the reality we face, but the motion goes the wrong way.

If you have spent time in your constituency, and I know the hon. member for Glengarry—Prescott—Russell has in his, talking to businesses that are already in the enormous difficulties that recessions pose, about trying to find the funds to do the things that need to be done to get more people back to work and on payrolls, any suggestion at the moment that one was going to add to the capacity to access training of an obligation—whether that worker has worked out or not—or any other sense of an excuse for a business to say no because there was a perception that what was coming was the heavy hand of government in an audit way thereafter, saying that if you have used and accessed training funds you must now provide long-term employment simply because government has come along and said you have to do it.

• (1440)

My sense of it from my own business experience, and I know the hon. member for Burlington would agree, is that that will not encourage people to put our people back to work. It will discourage them. I know that in my heart and in his heart that that is not the purpose that the hon. member for Essex—Windsor had when he brought this proposal to the House.

I appreciate, as I am sure we all do, the hon. member's desire to protect employment for Canadian workers. I understand and I respect the concern expressed, therefore, in his motion. I think I understand the good intentions that lie behind the motion, the sense that we have to find more ways to encourage our businesses and use government moneys in better, more targeted and more useful ways to make sure that those people who need retraining get it, and that in fact businesses participate in that program.

I can assure the hon. member that all of us want our investment in Canadian men and women to produce timely dividends. Perhaps we need to remind ourselves that we can best secure positive labour market results by supplying people with the training programs they need to pursue appropriate careers and to assist businesses in making sure that those desires are encouraged. That is not done by putting obstacles in the path of business in the training programs.

That is why this government has been so intent on providing training and retraining opportunities for Canadian workers. That is why we have developed the programs to encourage the private sector, including business and labour representative and professional trainers to enter into training partnerships with us of the kind, among other things, mentioned by the hon. member previously.

That is why the comprehensive strategy was developed, the Labour Force Development Strategy, to serve the needs of employers and workers alike. I think everybody in this House wants Canadian men and women to realize their full potential. We want them to participate successfully in the global economy that, whether we like it or not, is coming.

It is only through the education and training of our labour force that we can build a strong and competitive future and that we can compete in that new world that is coming.

Maybe it would be worth while to put on the record the record of this government with regard to these matters because I know the hon. member for Essex—Windsor had the view that somehow the government is reducing its interest in training. The government has, in fact, increased over time the investment in the training and the retraining of workers in programs offered since 1985 through the Canadian Jobs Strategy and, since this last fall, the new programs in the Unemployment Insurance Commission.

The government has always maintained that the failure to preserve a competitive work force would have dire consequences not only for individuals who lose their jobs, but for Canada's general economic prospects. We are aware that a training gap between our workers and those in other countries would have serious consequences for our economic health.