

We hope that those seminars will be as successful as those of last year and certainly more instructive and productive. The combined efforts of Government and labour-management delegates to establish a new productivity and employment growth centre are expected to pave the way for a better dialogue between management and labour. First highlighted in the budget last April, this centre is the result of an idea then advocated by the Minister of Finance and having to do with the establishment of a consultation and co-operation centre. That idea is at the root of concrete achievements, thanks to the outstanding work done by business and labour representatives at the sittings of a task force.

I think that such a centre will be a boon for Canadians generally, and even more so for management and unions. Ever since my colleague the Minister of Finance launched that idea last April, the centre has been taking shape. The Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce and I have had a number of meetings with the people who sit on that task force. With other Cabinet colleagues, we have examined their suggestions, and I am quite pleased to be able to say that tomorrow, at an important press conference attended by a few of my colleagues who are involved in this project with labour and management representatives, we will be in a position to make a very interesting announcement about that centre.

● (1140)

The third means by which we hope to improve the dialogue between labour and government is to considerably widen the employee exchange program between the Government and the labour organizations. Unfortunately, relations between the two have been somewhat constrained in recent years, and in fact, both remaining virtually ignorant about the operational procedures of each other. Therefore, to improve upon these relations, we plan to widen the Canada Exchange Program so as to promote temporary exchanges of union representatives and public servants. By stepping up these contacts, we will certainly promote a better understanding of the real problems and objectives of both. If it is proper for representatives of the business community to spend some time in the Canadian Public Service, and conversely for Canadian senior public servants to spend some time working for large Canadian companies, I find it quite natural for union leaders or representatives also to spend some time in the Federal Public Service and for senior public servants to spend some time within the larger Canadian unions. I believe this type of exchange to be essential and important to promote better dialogue, to create a better understanding and to establish the climate of confidence which is essential if we want all participants in the Canadian economy to understand, respect and trust each other.

In closing, I would like to speak briefly to the amendments that we plan to introduce to the Canada Labour Code and which are another aspect of the program which the Government has developed for labour. These amendments will include

first of all a series of new provisions designed to reduce the effects of family responsibilities on employment. The Code will also include a new section which will provide that any employee has the right to work in a safe and healthy environment. This section will also require that all parties concerned with safety and health in the workplace participate equally in this area and that employees under the federal jurisdiction apply much more consistent standards than at the present time. There will also be provisions dealing with sexual harassment in the workplace. In addition, other amendments will update the regulations on labour unions in order to simplify the work of the Canada Labour Relations Board.

To conclude, the increasing number of part-time workers are entitled to a better protection under the legislation. The Government therefore plans on continuing its consultations with provincial Governments, unions and businessmen in discussing pension plans and social benefits for part-time workers. By means of these measures and its consultations with the labour unions, the Government wants to do everything possible so that the labour movement can become a full partner in the economic recovery. As most Canadians, I believe that it will be better for all major economic agents to co-operate in facing the challenge of the eighties. I support wholeheartedly the concept of reinforcing relations between the unions, the government and the business community. To do so, we need stronger, not weaker unions. Since we want them to play a major role in the decision-making process, we must ensure that existing mechanisms promote a strong and better informed labour movement.

I am convinced, Mr. Speaker, that the proposals announced in the Speech from the Throne will become the basis for a national effort to ensure the success of the economic recovery which our Government has undertaken.

[English]

**Mr. Forrestall:** Mr. Speaker, I have a couple of brief questions for the Minister. He quite properly spoke of the long overdue extension of the right of collective association among the support staff of the House of Commons. Has the Minister given equal attention to the very direct support staff of Members of Parliament with respect to their equal rights, albeit in a slightly different way? Also, can he expand slightly on what we may learn tomorrow with respect to the centre for exchange, a centre by which we can begin to deal with some of the very pressing problems? Can he give an indication to the House today whether the centre will be directly under the aegis of Government, or will it have some independence by being in a university or at least on neutral ground? Can the Minister touch very briefly on funding?

[Translation]

I wish to thank the Hon. Member for his two very relevant questions. Clearly in my capacity of Minister of Labour I am taking this opportunity to stress unequivocally, my support for all Parliament employees, men and women who have long been