

*Adjournment Debate*

their efficiencies. Some are already offering suggestions for alternate commodities based on the transportation costs of these products.

These activities, coupled with the government's assistance to help farmers adjust to the short term impact of the loss of the WGTA will inevitably lead to long term economic growth in the prairies.

I ask the hon. member not to underestimate the skills and resources of all those involved in the prairie economy. These factors along with the financial assistance being provided will ensure a rapid adjustment to changes in the WGTA and the long term economic benefits for the prairies and for all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

## THE BUDGET

**Mr. Paul Crête (Kamouraska—Rivière-du-Loup, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, yesterday, March 1, I received an unsatisfactory response from the Minister of Human Resources Development.

I asked him whether the human resources investment fund infringed on the powers of the provinces and perpetuated the inefficient management of the labour force.

The minister's answer was very vague. He told me that my question had nothing to do with the fund's goal.

Since then, I acquired a copy of an information sheet for the staff of the human resources department which gave examples of some activities that could become part of the human resources investment fund. I will list them: putting more emphasis on employment development services, literacy and basic skills training, training and on-the-job training, assistance for child care and the earned-income supplement.

If the human resources investment fund will be covering these kinds of activities, how can the minister say that the fund will not infringe on the provinces' jurisdiction over manpower?

When it comes down to it, we can say that the minister made the same error during the debate on Axworthy's social program reform: the situation was properly diagnosed, they realized that the current system did not work, but they prescribed the wrong treatment.

Once again, they have decided that Ottawa must manage the fund, even though it is well known that the provinces manage areas directly related to manpower training much more efficiently.

Another possible activity is implementing a national strategy based on the job market. How can the minister suggest such an option when we all well know that, for years now, there have been 1.5 million jobs available in Canada for approximately 500,000 unemployed people, and that the breakdown in the equation lies between the job market and training.

The solutions suggested to us are the same old solutions, the federal government will come and tell the provinces how to do their job in their areas of jurisdiction. Does the minister not realize that this kind of attitude is entirely out of touch with our solutions for the future, for the 21st century, a future in which the idea that "small is beautiful" will be much more relevant than huge structures with national bureaucracies telling the local workforce should adjust?

With this fund, is the minister not going to perpetuate the same vision he has today, so that at a local level, in each community, manpower management committees will have to be devised to try to bring together again all the stakeholders and achieve what this federal system is unable to achieve, assuming of course that it can be done at a local level at least? Could the minister not take another approach, an approach to truly put manpower training back into the hands of the provinces who express such an interest, as Quebec has, where there is a consensus among unions, employers and the education sector.

All stakeholders involved in the manpower sector in Quebec have been saying for a long time that the best way to address the unemployment problem is to ensure a good fit between training, job creation measures and the unemployed who are waiting for a job. So could the minister not reconsider his decision and ensure that people at the grassroots who have the means to find solutions are allowed to do so, that is in Quebec and in the other provinces seeking the same types of responsibilities in the area of manpower training?

[*English*]

**Mr. Lyle Vanclief (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Agriculture and Agri-food, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to have the opportunity to respond to the question posed by the hon. member on the human resources investment fund that was recently announced in the budget.

The human resources investment fund will build on the strengths of its initial program components. Those program components include employment programs and services, social development programs in such areas as literacy and participation of disabled persons, the Canada student loans program and youth programs such as Youth Service Canada and Youth Internship.

The terms of the fund's operation will be developed in the coming months in consultation with the provinces with whom the government has already indicated its willingness to work.

The objectives of the fund may in some cases be best achieved through the direct delivery of services by the federal government. In other cases provinces or at times even local authorities may be best placed to achieve our common goals.