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as the federal government are investing approximately \$2.7 billion on those five tools.

We are empowering individuals and local communities and provincial governments, if that may be the case. These programs will be delivered by organizations. Some of those organizations may be the organizations the hon. member correctly brought to the attention of the House.

We have to put this debate into its proper context. The federal government felt that the system which presently exists was not working, and the hon. member knows this because Canadians told us from coast to coast. There were far too many jobs and skills mismatched, which thereby also increased unemployment.

What is positive about our program is that it is better targeted. It collapses 39 programs into five. They are five tools that we know actually work because over the past two years we have done experiments and pilot projects with these five programs.

If we look at the self-employment assistance, 34,000 people participated and 68,000 jobs were created. If we look at the wage top-ups and earning supplements, these have also increased the duration that people stay on the jobs plus their income, which is something we need to address as a federal government. We need to provide people with job opportunities and also good jobs that increase income levels.

I conclude my response by turning 360 degrees to the hon. member's question on my earlier comments. As we debate this in the House of Commons, Canadians are faced with the challenges of an ever changing economy. I spoke about the young people, the older workers, the multiple job holder and the part time employees who under the present unemployment insurance program are being marginalized and excluded. We will find that Canadians will respond well to this employment insurance bill. It brings people into the fold. It provides greater income security and opportunities. It recognizes that in an ever changing economy we need to do things better. We need to target things better.

From a fairness point of view there is the fact that low income Canadians with dependents will get a top up which will make them reach approximately 80 per cent of their average earnings. There is the fact that people who were excluded or were UI exhaustees in the past three years will have access to the programs. The only thing they have now is to go on social assistance.

People who were on parental benefits in the past five years will also receive the opportunity to access one of the five pools of the human resources investment fund. That may be a very important bridge to the workplace, to get them back to work.

Overall the reactions I have heard today have been balanced. The small business sector is applauding this move because it

basically reduces its tax burden. Small businesses really believe they are benefiting because through the employment insurance active measures they are actually going to have better human resources available.

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At the federal level we want to co-operate fully with our provincial counterparts to ensure we are doing this together, in partnership. In the final analysis, the employment insurance bill tabled last Friday is really about bringing positive change to people's lives and improving their quality of life.

[Translation]

Mr. Patrick Gagnon (Parliamentary Secretary to Solicitor General of Canada, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank and congratulate again the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Human Resources Development.

As you know, we are getting into a rather important debate which concerns a very large majority of my constituents in Bonaventure—Îles-de-la-Madeleine. I feel very emotional because, as a member of Parliament, every day I am made aware of requests which are sent to me, to my office or to various offices providing services to our constituents. We try to find ways to create appropriate and durable jobs in my riding.

As for the motion the hon. member for Mercier put forward, we have the feeling that it was written before the minister introduced his bill here in the House.

I sense in this motion that they are not willing to really work with the Government of Canada, that to a certain extent they question the sincerity of the members on this side of the House, that they question how seriously the Canadian government wants to get Canadians and Quebecers back to work, especially people living in remote areas.

I want to tell you, mainly for the benefit of the population but also for the benefit of the hon. member for Mercier, who is the official opposition's critic for this department, that this piece of legislation is intended to limit and ultimately eliminate the well-known overlapping and duplication in the system.

Again, for the benefit of the members opposite and of the public at large, I want to say that the program has been designed in such a way as to harmonize the programs we have to create jobs and develop employment across Canada.

Besides, what are we trying to do? We are inviting the provinces, especially my province, Quebec, and its employment minister, Mrs. Harel, whom we have to call by her name today, to sit down with us in order to explore the opportunities provided to all Quebecers, businesses and the unemployed in particular, to create permanent and durable jobs, and to stimulate as well, of course, the economic recovery of our area.