

### Supply

Second, on the definition of decentralization, local empowerment, and the redefinition of the relationship among the individual, the community, and government, it is clear to me that if we are to give vouchers or give the opportunity to an individual to make up his or her choice, that is the ultimate form of decentralization. It speaks to the confidence the federal government has in the people of Canada.

• (1155)

We believe the people of Canada can make the best choices for their own lives. They understand that in a changing economy they need to upgrade their skills, they need training opportunities, they need the types of vehicles that will ease their transition from the unemployment rolls on to the payrolls.

The issue of job creation is extremely important for the people of Canada. As a result of the measures taken in this bill, 100,000 to 150,000 jobs will be created. Who will create them? Small business, which is responsible for the creation of 85 per cent to 90 per cent of all new jobs.

What have we done to enhance the opportunities for small business? We have lowered the premiums. The hon. member from the Reform Party says it is only a nickel. If the hon. member were to calculate the reduction that occurs, not only to premium rates, and include the fact that maximum insurable earnings have gone down from \$43,000 to \$39,000, business also incurs that saving.

Equally important in this discussion is that it is not only business that gets the tax break, it is also individual Canadians who pay into the fund. That is a very important point to underline.

We believe in building a strong entrepreneurial spirit. I think our actions speak to that. One of the five tools we have outlined in the human resources investment fund is the self-employment assistance program. Since we formed the government, 34,000 people have participated in this program, creating 60,000 jobs. That speaks to job creation and it also speaks to empowering people and giving people the opportunity that is required.

How else is small business being helped? The five tools will enhance the human resources potential of our country, which means we are going to have a better skilled workforce. A better skilled workforce means we can set as a goal high paying, highly skilled jobs that produce high value added products. That is extremely important to underline as we modernize our economy.

When we talk about modernization, what about the new labour market information system that is going to connect business and people from coast to coast to coast so we may match people and also reduce the time people spend on the unemployment rolls of our country?

These are extremely positive measures, not to mention what we have learned from the past government's error in reference to reserves. By building up a higher reserve we are going to make sure that the next time there is a recession, hopefully not for a long time, or the next time there is a downturn in the Canadian economy, we will not be taxing small business and employees at a time when they need tax relief. This reserve will make that transition from economic downturns to better economic times a lot easier.

This will create stability in the premium rates. It will create jobs. It will create confidence. It will generate the type of confidence that is required so employment opportunities can be increased.

I would ask a simple question to the hon. member. In the employment insurance package the Reform Party introduced to the media a few months ago there are some fundamental flaws. One flaw is that it excludes more people than it includes, unlike our package, which brings in 500,000 people, including 44,500 seasonal workers who were excluded by the old unemployment insurance package. Why does the Reform Party, whether it is on the pension reform package or the employment insurance package, continue to practise the politics of exclusion?

• (1200)

**Mrs. Brown (Calgary Southeast):** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question.

I concur that this is a welcome meeting of the minds. We can have reasoned debate. We can come to the House of Commons and feel secure in knowing that at least our ideas will be received and debated in an atmosphere of collegiality, understanding that we come to this place with differing ideologies.

The simplest answer to the hon. member's question when it comes to differing ideologies and how we understand and view the unemployment insurance system is that there is no doubt in the minds of the Reform Party that the unemployment insurance system is a fundamental labour market institution as it was developed in the 1940s. When it was developed in the 1940s it was for a specific reason: temporary assistance as an individual moved between jobs. It was not as it has now become, "a cornerstone of Canada's social safety net".

If we look at it in those terms it is coming at the question from two very different points of view. On the one hand we would like to see it as part of and included in the labour market as a tool. On the other hand it has become part and parcel of the fabric of social support in Canada. I do not quite know where a meeting of the minds would find agreement. We could see where each of us is going, based on our belief systems, on what we believe to be right.