

[English]

Although small businesses create jobs they can face serious impediments such as restricted access to capital, inadequate management skills, a lack of skilled employees, limited technological sophistication and underdeveloped marketing abilities, especially abroad.

We must work on removing the impediments they face. We must also encourage small businesses to become aggressive innovators. Therefore, the government is committed to improving the business environment for small business and reshaping government policies and programs in support of small business.

In summary, the government has outlined its agenda for small business which underlines the government's determination to work closely with all the stakeholders to ensure that this vital sector continues to provide economic growth and create even more jobs.

Another important hallmark of the new economy is the world of telecommunications. In its plans for the future, the government will focus on the development of the information highway as a necessary infrastructure for the new economy. The information highway links the major elements of the new economy: users, content, technology and networks.

Well planned spending on this new type of infrastructure offers the potential for immediate job creation in the short term, while it is being built. As well, there will be a payoff in the longer term through the support of higher levels of economic activity when it is operational.

[Translation]

To conclude, the Government of Canada has carefully examined the international situation with regard to growth and job creation. While high unemployment and the increasing number of low-paying jobs may have many causes, they are basically due to the inability of economies to innovate and adjust to technological progress as well as changes in the international trade structure.

The Canadian program to promote innovation in all economic sectors and invest in people is on track.

• (1640)

• **Mr. Réal Ménard (Hochelaga—Maisonnette):** Madam Speaker, first I would like to thank the hon. member for Vancouver East for her always very heartfelt, very moderate remarks, and I would like to make two or three comments that will take the form of questions. As you can appreciate, today's opposition motion does not mean in any way that we believe jobs can be created by waving a magic wand. It simply says that this government does not offer us hope for the future, an overall vision regarding job creation. On a more fundamental level,

Supply

beyond this lack of vision, we see structural obstacles in the presence of two governments that have clearly not found a balance in terms of job creation.

For us, the best government is not the one that intervenes the least. The best thing that could happen to Quebecers is to have one less government. So much for the general framework.

In the meantime, since we must continue to work within that system, I would like to ask the hon. member for Vancouver East this: Does she agree with me that, at the national level, the sectors that will create jobs, where workers will be needed in coming years, surprisingly enough and contrary to conventional wisdom, are often sectors with strong community involvement? I am thinking in particular of the whole issue of support services for seniors. The hon. member knows that the number of senior citizens will double in Quebec and Canada. That is something we have in common.

As an eminent economist from the Université du Québec à Montréal, Ruth Rose, pointed out, there is also the child-care sector. We live in a society where people work split shifts. It is not like in the old days when people got up at eight o'clock in the morning and worked until five in the afternoon before going home. People now work irregular hours and governments will have to invest very heavily in a national network of child-care centres.

In closing, I will talk about the recreation sector, especially for handicapped people. We are fortunate to have in this House a member such as the hon. member for Mercier, whose keen intelligence and talent is well known and who has always said, like most members of the Bloc Québécois believe, that economic growth and job development must go hand in hand with community network development.

I therefore ask the hon. member if she believes we can, within her government's job proposal, emphasize community networks. Can we rely on her dynamism and her sense of involvement; will she become her government's social conscience if it ever decides to cut job-creation programs?

Mrs. Terrana: Do you want me to join the Bloc Québécois?

Mr. Ménard: No, that is not necessary.

Mrs. Terrana: Thank you. I have a great social conscience because I come from a riding that needs to have a social conscience. I also see the need to find other sources.

I believe that we must redefine the question of work now. Work is no longer what we knew. Now we talk about technology and support. You are right. We also talked about child care, for which, as you know, the Liberal Party and the government promised to create 50,000 spaces when economic growth in Canada allows.