

programs which might have helped to solve a few problems, such as those facing young Canadians.

One needs only to consider what illiteracy is costing the country to realize that if these new tax increases had been applied to programs geared to eradicate or diminish illiteracy, we might have looked at them more favourably. But, unfortunately, while illiteracy is costing us nearly \$10 billion a year, the Government contributed practically nothing to counter that problem, and nothing indicates that the increases announced in Bill C-117 would go towards programs that could be established to fight illiteracy problems facing young people as well as any other Canadians.

Mr. Speaker, we see the same problem again with the homeless; the Year of shelter for the homeless has just ended and, unfortunately, there were not very many actions taken by this government to solve the problems of the homeless in Canada.

We hear a lot about employment, about numbers, about the job situation in Canada, and much bragging is going on concerning the creation of a great many new jobs. However, even though these jobs generate additional revenues and reduce the need for unemployment insurance benefits, there is a lack of programs to counter the problems young people experience, for instance in the employment area. It is abnormal that young Canadians should continue to have unemployment rates of 13 per cent and more, when we could very well put up some programs with the additional revenues produced by the new jobs created due to an excellent economic growth which has benefited the Government. I am baffled by the fact that Canada's debt is not decreasing despite our very strong job-creating economic growth. I am deeply concerned over what would happen if Canada had to face a recession or even a period of economic stability.

I would have liked to see the Government maintain services offered by job placement officers on Canadian university and college campuses so that graduates could receive job offers from employers without leaving their schools . . . The Government must maintain services it used to offer. Last year, however, there was a decrease of some 30 to 40 per cent in ongoing services provided on university and college campuses, and a so-called revitalization of services was announced this year while the active involvement of job placement officers on university and college campuses is still being reduced.

Of course, I listened to my hon. colleague from Chambly (Mr. Grisé) and I would like him to explain, when he will have the floor, the Government's position on that issue. Unfortunately, I see that the time allocated to me has expired and I hope to have the opportunity to pursue the matter further with my colleague.

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The Hon. Member has 11 minutes remaining, plus 10 minutes for questions and comments.

Senate Reform

It being five o'clock, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS--MOTIONS

[English]

THE CONSTITUTION

SUGGESTED AMENDMENT FOR SENATE REFORM

Mr. Paul Gagnon (Calgary North) moved:

That, in the opinion of this House, the government should consider the advisability of amending the Constitution as it relates to the composition of the Senate and to provide for the reform of the Senate through the gradual introduction of the following measures:

1. Sitting Senators would retain their seats until their retirement, resignation or death, provided that any appointment to fill a vacancy would not continue beyond the date set for the ensuing general election in the Province or Territory for which the appointment is made;
2. Senators appointed on an interim basis would step down at the time a general election is called in the Province or Territory which they represent, the vacancy to be filled by direct election held concurrently with the provincial or territorial general election. Any Senator retiring in this manner would be eligible as a candidate for the vacancy thus created; and
3. Senators elected under this procedure would hold office for not longer than the duration of two legislatures of the Province or Territory which they represent, provided that they would be eligible as candidates for the Senate at ensuing elections.

He said: Mr. Speaker, this is a very simple, straightforward proposition which will right a past wrong. When Canada was created in 1867, the federal Government was bicameral: the upper House, the Senate and the lower House, the Commons. The Senate was to be appointed and the Commons elected. In 1867, that was legitimate. Time and social development have changed the situation. Appointment to political office is no longer legitimate. I would like to discuss a very venerable and integral institution of the Canadian Government, the Senate.

● (1700)

Motion M-81 proposes a solution which will effectively resolve any questions as to the Senate's legitimacy. In political terms, legitimacy has a synonym and that is election. Legitimacy is achieved through election.

In a representative democracy, the Members of any legislature must be held responsible to the electorate by means of periodic elections. Without this periodic endorsement by the people, any claim to reflective representation lacks both credibility and legitimacy.

How can the upper House, the Senate, legitimately perform its duties as a chamber of sober second thought when it might be necessary to take action that runs contrary to the will of the people as expressed by the House of Commons? The answer is that the Senate cannot legitimately perform its required duties.