

Adjournment Debate

had a task force deliberately looking at and studying the matter, and that it would make sure it made a report of some kind.

It turns out from the answer given by the Minister of State for Finance that there was no task force at all. A group of people were appointed from across the country. They were given free airline tickets. They came to Ottawa to discuss things with the officials of the Minister of Finance, had a "din-din" and a lovey in the hotels in Ottawa and then went back home. Rather than have Parliament and the people involved, we had people who were responsible perhaps, and perhaps not, to the insurance companies, banks, trust companies and credit unions discussing among themselves how they would divide up the laws and regulations that affect financial intermediaries.

I and other members of our party called on the then Minister of State for Finance and Minister of Finance to set up a parliamentary committee to inquire, study the matter and report to Parliament so that laws and statutes could be passed to amend the current law with respect to financial intermediaries.

I say again today to the current Minister that this group, which is now winding up its activities, should be dismissed. It was an interesting group, but it did not accomplish anything. It cannot accomplish anything. The matter should be immediately referred to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs or a task force set up, if that is the pleasure of the Government, to study this issue so that we can come to grips with it.

Financial intermediaries are very important in the development of Canada. Our laws with respect to them have to be amended. They must be brought up to date. If not, our country will suffer. It will be more difficult to move money from one investment activity to another. It must be dealt with as soon as possible. I hope this Parliament will come to grips with that issue.

[Translation]

Hon. Barbara McDougall (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure to rise in the House to answer this question. I also wish to thank the men and women of the riding of St. Paul's and the Right Hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) for having given me this honour.

[English]

No one is more aware of the confusion in the financial intermediary system than I am. I have spent 20 years of my life working the financial sector. In fact, I worked for three of the four or five pillars, depending on how one defines them. I am also, as all of us are, a consumer of financial services.

In response to my colleague's question, there is indeed a private sector Advisory Committee on Financial Institutions. It is probably not constituted as he would have constituted it, and probably not as I would have either, but let me just give some history of this committee.

It is chaired by William Dimma, the President of A. E. LePage, and is known as the Dimma committee. Its composition is mainly of senior executives from major private financial corporations with some consumer and academic representations. It was formed in January 1984 by the previous government. Its purpose was to provide the then Minister with a private-sector perspective on the structural changes in the industry, many of which were outlined by my colleague in his question. The Dimma Committee was also to comment on the Finance Department's working papers on the modernization of the legislation for financial institutions.

● (1810)

On behalf of the Government, I decided to allow the committee to convene for one more meeting. I believe it is important to allow the committee to continue to study the working papers of the Department of Finance and, more importantly, I believe it is important to proceed with legislation in this important area as rapidly as possible, and in that process to present papers to the House.

I will be furthering the consultation process in this important area in a very specific way to ensure that the harmonization of financial institutions legislation is complete. This consultation will be carried out in a very specific and limited time frame.

As the House knows, our Party had launched the most comprehensive consultative process of any Government in our history. With no disrespect to members of the Dimma Committee who are persons of distinction, I agree with my hon. colleague that this committee is a good example of the consultation process gone wrong. The financial institutions in our country have been in need of revised legislation for many years. Indeed, the Trust Companies Act and the Loan Companies Act have not been substantially revised since the early part of the century.

Instead of action, the industry leaders were given, as my colleague has suggested, a series of dinners and asked to comment on papers produced by the Department. I intend to speed up the process that my hon. colleague has outlined by way of better consultation and by proceeding to legislation.

EMPLOYMENT—YOUTH TRAINING OPTION PROGRAM. (B)
GOVERNMENT'S POSITION

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce-Lachine East): Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, November 7, I asked the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald) how she justified the cancellation of the First Chance Program which was implemented to train and employ young people by replacing it with the Youth Training Option Program. First Chance was ready to begin on October 1. It would have provided \$100 million in its first year to help young people train on the job, and it would have provided \$1 billion per year over a five-year period. In 1985, it would have provided for 100,000 trainees.