

The Address

system that gives them a sense of their own identity and their own importance.

• (1645)

I see your signal, Mr. Speaker, and I respect that, but I want to make this final case. I believe that if we do our work well, bring the different voices of Canada together to sing in a single chorus and if we give and restore a sense of hope to a lot of Canadians then nothing will be a stronger unifier. Nothing will bring us together more and nothing will give Canadians a greater sense of hope and opportunity than if their members of Parliament from all regions and everywhere in Canada are working together to build a system that will be distinctly Canadian. That will give Canadians a sense of who we are and what we can do and bring that special touch that we have brought to the world so often: compassion, understanding and humanity.

That will say to all Canadians that this is why we are different. We are not different because we take different stands from other countries but because we are able to design for Canadians the way we want to live and give people once again, in this great tumult that we face around the world, a feeling that this is a place that belongs to them and that everybody has a fair chance.

[Translation]

Mr. Yvan Loubier (Saint-Hyacinthe—Bagot): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the minister. I heard the speech of the Minister of Human Resources Development and, listening to him, you would think that everything is just fine in our country. Workers' productivity seems adequate as well as the competitive edge of our businesses; in fact, the need to fundamentally improve our competitiveness in light of the globalization of markets and, consequently, the productivity of Canadian workers, seems to have been overlooked by the minister.

Does the minister not agree that it is time to fundamentally change the Canadian approach regarding the training and development of human resources? Indeed, with two levels of government, the Canadian system is one of duplication and overlapping in the field of human resources, occupational training, business training and revenue security, which includes unemployment insurance where there are two employment offices and some 40 standards for 12 or 14 programs.

I ask the minister if he would be prepared, given that action is required urgently regarding job creation and the development of the productivity of workers in Quebec as well as everywhere in Canada, to consider offering to each province that the federal level withdraw from every field dealing directly or indirectly with the implementation of a genuine labour-market policy by the provinces? In so doing, the federal government would satisfy Quebec's claim for a single window which would be

managed by the Quebec government, offering at the same time a new opportunity to all Canadian provinces. Quebec would thus be satisfied but would also be in a position to respond to the emergency in unemployment and could hope to develop its labour market, at least in the short term, until its sovereignty becomes a *fait accompli* through the democratic process.

Mr. Axworthy (Winnipeg South Centre): Mr. Speaker, first of all, when I spoke earlier, I did not say that everything was fine. Quite the contrary. I expressed my concern about poverty in Canada and about the lack of job training for young people. Perhaps the hon. member was otherwise occupied, but I did indeed stress in my speech that this was a serious problem for Canada.

• (1650)

The solution to this problem, however, is not to divide, but to unite Canada and to work together to find a solution. Of course there should be good discussions with the provinces as they are after all our partners in this great process of reform. At the same time, the problem of duplication is a good point to consider within the broad framework of social reform. Training initiatives cannot be considered separately from unemployment insurance or social assistance measures.

As the Prime Minister stated during question period, if funds for training were transferred right away, Quebec would lose considerably in terms of *per capita* allocations. I do not think Quebecers want to receive less support from the Canadian government.

I would like to have a productive meeting with the new Quebec ministers of Labour and Manpower, just as I would like to have the same discussion with the other ministers. In fact, I am thinking about meeting with all of the ministers some time in February and this would be the time for discussions between the two levels of government. Then we would have a good idea of the duplication problems that exist.

[English]

Mr. Stephen Harper (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for his speech and congratulate him on his perennial re-election in his constituency of Winnipeg South Centre along with his appointment to cabinet in an important post which reflects a great deal of confidence in him on the part of his party and leader.

We welcome the attempts that the government will be making to create a comprehensive social security system and to encourage open discussion of this in Parliament.

Recently the Ministry of Finance released a document that showed our unemployment insurance program to be one of the