

OFFICIAL REPORT (HANSARD)

Thursday, October 19, 2006

Government Programs

Ms. Ruby Dhalla (Brampton—Springdale, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, the human resources minister and the Prime Minister seem to always speak with one mind when it comes to muzzling voices of those who are in dissent.

They have written off the youth. They have given up on older workers. They have cancelled Canada's volunteerism initiative, which impacts thousands of volunteer organizations across the country. They have even abandoned adults who want to be able to learn to read and write.

The Conservatives continue to attack the most vulnerable in our society. Does the minister not realize that her cuts are forcing thousands of literacy organizations to close their doors?

Hon. John Baird (President of the Treasury Board, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, we are looking at all government expenditures to ensure that they are achieving the results they were intended to achieve. It is something that is tremendously important.

Rather than put funds to have conferences and symposiums, rather than put funds to have advocacy, which was so popular among the previous government members, we want to focus on something unique. We want to focus on actually helping people learn to read and write.

(1445)

Ms. Ruby Dhalla (Brampton—Springdale, Lib.):

Mr. Speaker, the only thing the Conservatives are focusing on is attacking the most vulnerable in the country.

The facts are clear. The budget cuts by the Conservative government have gutted funding for adult literacy and training programs across the country. The axe has fallen, without any consultation, without any consideration and without any compassion. The Prime Minister has indicated, not only to his entire caucus but to Canadians across the country, that it is his way or the highway.

Why is the government so determined to muzzle, to gag and to silence the most vulnerable?

Hon. John Baird (President of the Treasury Board, CPC):

Mr. Speaker, when the Liberal Party was in government, the most vulnerable in society were taxpayers.

We saw the billion dollar boondoggle at HRDC. We saw another billion dollar boondoggle when it came to the long gun registry. We saw, literally, millions of dollars misspent and misdirected, some of it even into the coffers of the Liberal Party.

Thank goodness we have a Prime Minister and a government that stand with ordinary taxpayers and fight for them.

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