

*Supply*

challenges of the 21st century. If we look at the statistics, far too many young people, in fact 52 per cent between the ages of 15 and 24 and these are the figures for Quebec have a first-hand knowledge of poverty. In the same group 56 per cent are unemployed. This is no way to prepare for the future.

[English]

We must face the fact that we do have a crisis. As a nation we cannot afford a 30 per cent high school drop-out rate. It is not logical to have 400,000 young people unemployed while 300,000 jobs stay unfilled. It is high time governments, labour and the educational sector together with individual Canadians start working together to build a comprehensive national apprenticeship program.

• (1555)

It is not a simple task but it is the first step toward guaranteeing a future for the youth of today.

[Translation]

It is high time the government faced up to its responsibilities and took the initiative. It must play its role as policymaker and establish a Canadian perspective on economic growth. It must create networks and partnerships for obtaining knowledge, information and skills. It must put in place the infrastructures that are needed, so that our young people will have a future.

So far we cannot congratulate the government on its record. Young people have never been so handicapped in their attempts to enter the labour market. It is an inconscionable waste of talent, and it is high time we got the situation under control before we reach the point of no return.

Summer will soon be with us—though it may not look like it, especially today—and I am sure that like me, members have probably received many CVs in the past few weeks. The rush is on for summer jobs, to pay the cost of tuition in September. Too many young people will be disappointed. There will be no jobs for them. Government cutbacks at all levels mean that jobs are disappearing at a terrifying rate, and there seems to be no hope on the horizon.

[English]

Young Canadians are caught in a system that does not seem to offer any hope. They must daily face rising

unemployment and feelings of alienation. They are more and more frustrated with an education system that cannot help those 100,000 high school students who finally give up and drop out. What is scary is that this has become a yearly statistic. What has happened to this country in the last few years? Where are we going?

Young people worry about not having the skills to find jobs in tomorrow's knowledge-based economy. They do not understand why the federal government will not provide them opportunities.

[Translation]

Young Canadians are desperately seeking a new vision of this country, a vision that will give them confidence and hope in the future. These young people are not afraid to get involved. They are ready to work, but they also have to know there is light at the end of the tunnel. These young people believe in themselves and their potential, and they are eager to use their talents to help make this country as economically strong and competitive at the international level as it used to be. They are ready to come on board.

[English]

I would like to quote from an article in *The Toronto Star* of May 8:

The issue of youth unemployment is not just automatic. It cuts to our social fabric, as the Yonge Street riots showed us a year ago. Young people are frustrated.

Karen Mock, who heads the B'nai Brith League for Human Rights, reports that there is a growing effort toward recruitment of young people by the Heritage Front, and other racist groups, at high schools and college campuses with other young people acting as recruiters.

When there is an economic downturn, people look for someone to blame. Disenfranchised youth who cannot find jobs and fear that they will not be able to find them become easy prey for recruitment into hate groups that attack minorities.

This weekend's full-blown race riot on Parliament Hill is a symptom of the Tories' inability to deal with youth unemployment and hate crime.