

Supply

remove it and replace it with another tax that will apply to food as well. That is really shameful! Then he changes his mind and says that he will not remove it but will hold consultations. He is really asking for a blank cheque. Finally, we will recall this great statement from the Leader of the Opposition, "You know, we must not be obsessed with the deficit; the Conservatives are becoming obsessed with deficit reduction".

So the question I have for my colleague from Québec-Est is this: How do his constituents see the importance of reducing the deficit and how do they react to those who claim that the deficit is not important and that we must not be obsessed with it? I know the people of Québec-Est very well since I was born in Quebec City and a large part of my family lives in Quebec City and in your riding, Mr. Speaker. I am convinced that these people are intelligent and very concerned about the future and economic prosperity. How do the people of Québec-Est react to careless statements about the importance of controlling public spending and lowering the deficit?

Mr. Tremblay (Québec-Est): Mr. Speaker, like me, you have noticed that it is easy to recognize a Quebecer, especially one from Quebec City. His constant smile clearly shows that my hon. colleague from Terrebonne is originally from our lovely region.

Remember the evening of September 4, 1984 when it was announced that the Conservative Party would form the next government with a majority. An eminent member of the opposition said: "Anyway, the coffers are empty". Despite that, I think that we have done things which are worth listening to and repeating again and again and we have been trying to do that for several years. My hon. colleague touched on the important point of labour force training.

When a company or a country is in difficulty, just saying "eliminate the deficit" will not make it go away overnight. It is a long battle and I can say we have been through it on the issue of training. Let me talk briefly about the Challenge Program.

This program was initiated by our government in 1985. Today it gives high school, college and university students an opportunity to have a summer job in keeping with their aspirations. It gives them practical experience to show a future employer when they graduate. When we

visit some companies, we realize that these students are often hired outside the summer period, to replace someone on maternity leave or someone who has suddenly fallen ill or to work certain hours over the Christmas or Easter holidays. Today young graduates already have some practical experience.

This is what we are setting up for people who were not students when we took power. My hon. colleague from Terrebonne knows very well that we spare no effort to use all available funds for programs that will give Canada the highly skilled labour force needed for global and world trade.

• (1735)

Many countries now look up to us as an example and envy us. They are implementing initiatives that we began in 1984, but unfortunately they are doing it ten years later. If we follow these programs, we will have benefits and concrete results ten years before other countries. At this rate, Canada will long remain in the much desired position of being the No. 1 country in the world.

[*English*]

Mr. Robert D. Nault (Kenora—Rainy River): Mr. Speaker, I have listened with a great deal of interest to the comments of my friend from Quebec.

After nine years of Tory rule and after looking at the devastation on the economic development side, the unemployment situation, the youth unemployment, people who are going to food banks in places like Montreal and Quebec City, it just amazes me that a member can stand up and say it is the Liberals' fault.

They say they are sorry, they are doing their best but they have only been in power for nine years and are still trying to get it right. They are still trying to figure which programs are going to work as far as the federal government is concerned in Quebec. They are still trying to figure out which programs they are going to use to get people back to work in Ontario.

However, it is still the Liberals' fault. It has to be the Liberals' fault. They say people cannot trust the Liberals because it was all their fault for the last 10 years, 20 years and 30 years. I want to suggest to the last speaker and to the government that, Canadians are not buying that. What they want are concrete solutions.