

Oral Questions

another area of real crisis, and that is the area of youth unemployment. The Minister said that the Government's programs were working. There are 800,000 young people out there to show that those programs are not working. If the Government's programs are working, can the Minister explain why there is a higher rate of unemployment for young people who are between the ages of 20 and 24 in Canada than in any other country in the industrialized world?

Hon. Roy MacLaren (Minister of State (Finance)): Mr. Speaker, I will deal with the last point before I attempt to address the other question. In fact a recent report on unemployment issued by the OECD would suggest that, when comparing the performance of other industrialized countries in dealing with youth unemployment with that of Canada, Canada has not been doing badly at all. Our youth unemployment rates are not very different from the OECD average.

● (1130)

Partly in response to the direct programs provided by the Government for youth training and youth participation in the labour force, and a variety of programs which, in the fiscal year 1984-1985 are estimated to cost over \$600 million, we will see the participation of some 185,000 young people. That is, of course, additional to the jobs which will be created by the private sector, thanks in part to the programs in place from the last two Budgets. I believe the effect of those combined elements is that the youth participation rate, according to the latest statistics, has gone up. We have seen a greater youth participation in the job market than we have since the beginning of the recession.

REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT INTRODUCE NEW EMPLOYMENT INITIATIVES

Hon. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa): Mr. Speaker, my question is directed to the Acting Prime Minister. I want to begin by saying what a bankrupt Government we have. Yesterday we learned that we have almost 800,000 unemployed young people. The national figures which came out today show a great increase in national unemployment.

Yesterday the Government called the unemployed lazy. Today there is not a senior economics Minister of the Cabinet in the House for Question Period. It is this Government which is bankrupt. It is the Government which is lazy, not the unemployed.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent: Since there is one Government in this country which set unemployment as the top priority more than a year ago, and that is the Government of Manitoba, and since it has now the best record in this country by bringing down unemployment by 2.5 per cent in one year, I want to ask the Minister this: will the Government demonstrate the political will—which is what the Government of Manitoba has—to create jobs, so that every man and woman who wants to work can do so? Will the Government now admit that its policies

are wrong and bring in new initiatives before we recess for the summer?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Acting Prime Minister): Mr. Speaker, I have always thought that my hon. friend was an honest man. I do not believe he is particularly attractive politically—neither am I—but I always thought my hon. friend would respect the truth. By quoting me as having said yesterday that unemployed young people are lazy, I believe he was breaking down the basic ABC of academic propriety. I am quite sad about that.

What I said was that in establishing the statistics of unemployment there were different degrees of certainty. In other words, we were certain of the conventional way of establishing unemployment figures among the youth, if you follow the four weeks' searching and availability criteria of Statistics Canada. I said, with respect to what is called the "hidden unemployment", that there were differing degrees of uncertainty. In some cases a person would have given up after trying hard. In other cases some people might not have tried hard enough, simply being lazy. If the Hon. Member reads *Hansard* he will find it is all there. I would be grateful if he did me the favour of reading what I said.

As the Hon. Member for St. John's East said, it might have been unwise of me, but you cannot teach an old dog new tricks. If you like academic debate, you bite into it. I would have thought that my old friend would pay me the respect of reading what I said and not distort it.

With respect to Manitoba, I am very pleased to see progress being made. However, again, if one wanted to be totally honest about it, one would have to look at the extent of the support which the federal Government has given to the Government of Manitoba in recent months.

An Hon. Member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Pepin: In my description of the performance of the Government I did not even mention a moment ago the \$2.4 billion which the Government has invested in Canadian growth in recent months through what is referred to as the SRCP program.

An Hon. Member: Oh, oh!

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, there is somebody on the other side of this House who is making a noise.

Mr. Pepin: With respect to the total argument, I tried in my previous answer—

Mr. Speaker: The Chair has concern at this point about the ability, within the framework of a question and answer period, to deal with the matters which are raised, and the time it is taking in the exchanges. The Hon. Member for Oshawa has just put one question. He has two supplementaries. This will be the third question and we have used, at this rate, close to half the Question Period. The Hon. Member for Oshawa on a supplementary question.