

Adjournment Debate

[*Translation*]

On four occasions the government decided to cut increases in federal transfer payments to the provinces for post-secondary education. I think that is the wrong approach, because if we consider the period between 1986 and 1995, there will be from \$9 million to \$10 million less to spend on our colleges and universities. And the result? Tuition fees have skyrocketed and student debt has increased by leaps and bounds. Today there are even waiting lists for young people, and where I am, in Winnipeg, it can be up to two years. I think that is entirely unacceptable.

The government may have overlooked the fact that by the year 2000, two-thirds of the new jobs that will be available will require 12 years of schooling, while the remaining one-third will require 16. This means we must invest in our colleges and universities as well as in jobs.

The government is destroying the prospects of our young people. As far as productivity is concerned, the future of our country is at risk. We have to look at education as an investment. It is an investment, and if we do not make that investment today, we will pay the price tomorrow.

I would like to repeat what I said not long ago, and if the hon. member wants to challenge that, I will listen to what he has to say. Young people need jobs, education and training. They must take an active part in preparing for their future, and they must believe in what they are doing. They have asked the government for help, but it seems to me the government has chosen to ignore them and refuses to recognize the fact that there is a tremendous need for this kind of help today because of the recession.

Our young people want to believe in their future and they want to make a major contribution to the prosperity of this country. That is what our young people want. If the situation does not change very drastically, these young people will be in a position to effect the changes required following the next federal election.

• (1820)

Mr. Marcel R. Tremblay (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Minister of State (Youth) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to my hon. colleague from St.

Boniface. Following his question in the House last March 16, insofar as employment and immigration is concerned, I am pleased to inform the hon. member that this government is fully aware of its continued responsibility to assist Canadian students again this year in their search for summer employment.

The Minister of State for Youth, Fitness and Amateur Sport announced the funding for the Challenge '92 Program on March 18, 1992. The Challenge program, as you know, Mr. Speaker, is designed to help students find summer employment and to give them practical work experience that will ease their transition from school to work.

Challenge is focused on assisting those who are facing difficulties in the labour market. Therefore, emphasis is placed on helping high school students, who traditionally have the most difficulty in finding summer employment, and potential and recent high school dropouts who risk continued employment problems.

The Summer Employment/Experience Development (SEED) component of Challenge '92, which pays wage subsidies to employers for hiring students, will be strengthened by \$3 million. The SEED component will be increased from \$80 million to \$83 million.

It is hoped that SEED will encourage employers from all sectors to participate in the program and to create as many job opportunities as possible this summer for Canadian students.

Last year the SEED component subsidized over 29,000 employers who created over 54,000 new jobs with a budget of \$80 million.

In addition, the funding for the four remaining challenge components will be kept at last year's levels. They will receive the following allocations: student business loans \$900,000, business drive for jobs \$800,000, native internship program and the Canada Employment Centres for students \$12 million.

The Challenge program promotes and encourages employers to create jobs and sponsor on-the-job learning experiences for young people. This program has been very successful since its inception in 1985. It is hoped that it will be even more successful this year in stimulating employers to create jobs for students and to actively participate in providing valuable summer work experience to Canada's future labour force.