

Canadian Economy

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member but his allotted time has expired.

[Translation]

Mr. Irénée Pelletier (Sherbrooke): Mr. Speaker, in the motion he introduced this afternoon, the hon. member for Rimouski (Mr. Allard) states in section (b), and I quote:

(b) that the votes allocated by the government to the Canada Works programs are not sufficient to create enough jobs to overcome the massive and persistent unemployment which is especially severe among the 18 to 30 age group . . .

Mr. Speaker, this is true. I entirely agree. The Canada Works programs have not been designed to solve the problems of the unemployed in the 18 to 30 age group. I think that part of the motion of the hon. member for Rimouski is true, but there is also an extremely important matter which the government should consider as soon possible.

Last Sunday a program on the CBC French network gave us an indication of the enormous problems met by young people seeking employment in several countries of the world. For example, we were shown that France as well as Italy, Germany, the United States and most industrialized countries have not succeeded in finding sufficient jobs for the young people 18 to 30 age group graduating from colleges, universities, technical schools and so forth. And what can we say about those in some countries in the world who do not have the privilege to be educated or to further their education? Therefore it becomes very hard for that group of young people to find openings in the labour force.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that it is a catastrophic, disastrous and dramatic situation because I have the privilege and the honour to represent in the House a riding which has many young people. There are two universities, two junior colleges, ten-odd education establishments which produce bachelors, masters and doctors every year, as well as graduates from technical schools who have countless difficulties finding employment in this region. Too often they have to leave the Sherbrooke area to seek work on large markets such as Montreal, Quebec City or Toronto.

Mr. Speaker, it is ever more difficult to accept that situation for the simple reason that those who are born in a given region and who have roots there do not want to work elsewhere. So, we can hardly accept the fact that they must leave their region after having obtained a bachelor or a master degree for the simple reason that many of them, having taken up studies paid for by their parents or even the state, find themselves without work after some fifteen or twenty years.

● (2112)

Mr. Speaker, even against that background I would like to bring a glimmer of hope which has recently come to us from the government. As everyone knows, nearly five years ago the Canadian government decided to decentralize some federal departments and transfer them to other regions of the country where the economy was at a low ebb. One of these decentralizations was announced in October; following Moncton,

[Mr. Caouette (Villeneuve).]

Matane, Bathurst in New Brunswick and two or three places in western Canada, it has been decided to move the mapping section of the Department of Energy, Mines and Resources to Sherbrooke.

Needless to say, the people of Estrie and Sherbrooke in particular greeted with joy this government decision because it is a section that requires advanced skills and, accordingly, the fact that we have in this Quebec area, in Sherbrooke, two universities, one English and one French, two junior colleges and several institutions of learning, makes it a well designated place for this type of decentralization. It will enable many of our future graduates to look forward to finding in our region the type of jobs tailored to their skills.

I see, Mr. Speaker, that the government's decision provided that between 750 and 1,000 jobs would be decentralized. It means that nearly 1,000 public servants now in Ottawa, of which 75 per cent are English-speaking and 25 per cent French-speaking, would move into our region. But within a decade or a dozen years, the linguistic breakdown of that decentralization would nearly reflect the breakdown we now find in the region and which is the opposite of what it will be at the beginning, that is about 25 per cent English-speaking and about 75 per cent French-speaking.

Mr. Speaker, members opposite as well as government members and people in several corners of the country have often asked the government to decentralize several federal departments in order to bring them a little closer to people and not to centralize all the government operations in Ottawa.

We know that a number of countries with a federal structure have already undertaken this kind of decentralization. In the United States for example, they do not get all cartographic material from Washington but from Denver, Colorado, and a number of other federal departments and agencies are not necessarily centralized in the federal capital.

Mr. Speaker, due to these circumstances, the young people of our district who graduated from our two universities or our two junior colleges or from other private or public institutions had in the past to go into exile, to go to larger centres. I find encouraging to see that this decentralization program will give a bigger number of qualified young people the opportunity to stay in the Eastern Townships area.

There is also another point which has been raised by several hon. members today. I am referring to the fact that, apart from a few very fragmental and too often temporary programs, there are no specific programs for young people. Consequently, what happens too often is that they work for a few months and after that they have to pass from a Canada Works program to a Young Canada Works Program, a LIP program or an Opportunities for Youth Program, as has been the case during the last few years.

Of course, these initiatives are very commendable but I humbly suggest, Mr. Speaker, that the federal and provincial governments must concentrate more and more on the problem of unemployment among the 18 to 30 age group because unless they find some lasting and not temporary measures to