

Supply

budget. Even governmental officials are reported as saying, when asked about what this is going to do to help the youth of this nation or even the nation in general, "Don't hold your breath." Officials say that the program will not make more than a dent in the over-all unemployment problems this country is experiencing. What this nation needed, Mr. Speaker, what the people needed, was hope. Hope is something that we do not have.

● (1600)

[Translation]

Mr. Pierre Gimaïel (Lac-Saint-Jean): Mr. Speaker, we are considering an Opposition motion which seems to indicate that the New Democratic Party has developed some awareness of the employment situation of young people in Canada.

I intend to use the time allowed to give my personal impression of the last ten years and what they have meant to the development of the role played by young people and the Canadian Government. I can only applaud the fact that today, a Member of the New Democratic Party has moved a motion expressing his Party's concern for the young people of this country.

Fortunately, Mr. Speaker, the Canadian Government realized well before 1983 that young people were having trouble finding employment in this beautiful country of ours, and took positive action and introduced policies aimed at helping young people to cope with this situation.

For ten years now, a Liberal Government, that is, the present Government and its predecessors, have introduced programs such as Opportunities for Youth, the Canada Community Development Program and Canada Works. I may recall that during its short period in power in 1979, the first action taken by the Progressive Conservative Party and one of the few decisions it did make, was to do away with Canada Works. This program, which for many years has been severely criticized by the Official Opposition, happens to be the most legitimate vehicle the Canadian Government or any government for that matter has ever given young people as a means of expressing themselves. The Canada Community Development Program and Opportunities for Youth—all these job creation programs constitute an act of trust by the Government in a group in our society that was faced with employment problems. Young people are being asked to design and submit their own projects, and the Canadian Government will give them the money they need to demonstrate that their concepts are workable and to set up their own development structures.

Mr. Speaker, our young people are extraordinary, because they are living in difficult times. However, I feel that in a country where life is becoming difficult for everyone, coping with that situation is feasible. Our young people grew up in nice homes with parents who are secure in their jobs and who are generally quite well off. Often they can afford quite a few luxuries such as travel, several cars or television sets, and so

on. In fact, our young people have been surrounded since birth by what would be called affluence in any part of the world. I think that previous generations acquired, quite legitimately, a very high degree of material security, which in turn put our young people in a situation where the material security their parents had acquired in order to provide their children with the essentials of life finally led them to opt for other values, to make a choice. That is, they were told that jobs are important but jobs are not everything, and they discovered other values to defend such as the environment and peace throughout the world and a number of other concepts such as the co-operative system, group work, solidarity, and they made those decisions calmly and clearly. Today, I think we owe them some recognition, because for two years people have been talking about the recession all over North America and the Western world. It seems to be the only subject of conversation. When did people start talking about a recession, Mr. Speaker? When other people, and not only young people, started having trouble getting jobs. When young people had to cope with this, they did so in a positive way, and they are still doing so. They coped with this problem by developing ideas and trying to get people to accept them. To a certain extent, they have led the way as a result of certain views they have expressed on matters that we did not think were terribly important, such as acid rain, and now Canada is very busily defending those views. Young people made this happen. Today, the Canadian Government is being accused of a lack of concern for these young people. This surprises me, because since 1970, the Government of Canada has shown tremendous concern for young people and their future. Have union leaders shown the same concern for young people in our country during the last fifteen years? Has anyone ever seen a union leader get up and try to talk about the future of young people with his own union members, with the management of businesses with whom he negotiates and with various levels of Government?

● (1610)

Mr. Speaker, in the present Budget, the Canadian Government has earmarked billions of dollars for manpower training, which will be used more specifically for young people. Has anyone wondered why the Canadian Government has to train young people who are just out of school? After all, the same Canadian Government is already paying for 50 per cent of postsecondary education, which includes CEGEPs and universities, and 50 per cent of the cost of education in technical schools, plus equalization payments. So why, after paying all that, should the Canadian Government be obliged to pay for training people who have just finished their formal education? It is easy for the Opposition parties to stand up and blame a Government for adopting certain policies, but I want to point out that these policies based on co-operative federalism were originated by the Liberal Party of Canada over the years, and I think the Opposition parties are ill-advised to point a finger