

• (1020)

Hon. John McDermid (Minister of State (Finance and Privatization)): Mr. Speaker, we have listened to the lead-off speaker today from the Liberal Party, a member from the Scarborough area of metropolitan Toronto. He stood here and talked about a litany of problems we are facing in the province of Ontario, but once again the Liberals have no solutions.

They stand and its more money: maybe we should throw more money at this problem and more money at that problem. They do not say where the money comes from. They do not say we will raise the deficit. They do not say we will borrow more money, we will raise taxes or whatever it may be. They do not say any of those things.

The hon. member talks about the job creation. I can tell him that we have come through a very difficult recession. Of course our unemployment rate is unacceptably high right now. I can tell him that we saw the fastest job creation in the industrialized world between 1984 and 1990 when 1.6 million new jobs were created, of which 1.4 million still exist. We must understand that. It must be understood by the Canadian people that 1.4 million of those jobs still exist. Entrance into the labour market and the unemployment rate because of the recession we have gone through have increased.

He talks about the decaying of neighbourhoods and the drug problem. I remember very well—and I am going to remind him of this because I think it is very important—a speech that the Prime Minister of this country gave. I believe it was in 1987. I could be wrong. I sat here in the House and listened to the hon. member for Hamilton East. She stood and ridiculed the Prime Minister on his speech. The Prime Minister said that we had a drug problem in this country. He put more money and more effort with the RCMP to fight drugs. The RCMP has been somewhat successful but not successful enough because we have not seen the elimination of the drug problem.

The Liberal Party, led by the hon. member for Hamilton East, tore the Prime Minister apart saying that he was exaggerating, that he was saying things were way out of control, that he should not be talking that way, and that that was not accurate.

Today we see Liberal members stand and all of a sudden express concern about crack houses and about

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drug problems in this country. The Prime Minister warned about this problem and the government did something. The hon. member says it did not. It has done something about it and it is continuing to work on it, in co-operation, I might say, with local police forces and police forces around the world. It is very important.

He talks about immigration and immigration levels. The hon. member should know the system. The system was in place long before we became the government. The government through the Minister of Employment and Immigration would contact the provinces in a consultative mode and ask: "What can you absorb in immigrants each year?" Those recommendations come in and that is how the levels are determined.

The hon. member is saying that it is all the federal government's fault for bringing too many immigrants to this country and not funding them. For heaven's sake, education has always been a responsibility of the provinces. If he is saying that we should start funding elementary and secondary education from the federal government then he should stand and say it.

Is that Liberal policy? Is it Liberal policy to fund elementary and secondary education? If it is then let us have it as a policy and let us see them fight that one out in a constitutional way. I mean the provinces will take the money.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I believe that was a comment but the member has a minute to answer.

Mr. Lee: Mr. Speaker, that was a long comment with a question wedged in at the end.

I did not say it was the federal government's fault there is immigration to this country. I said it was the federal government's responsibility to ensure that immigrant settlement took place properly.

I am not saying the government should throw money at this. I am saying the government should use its brains, its leadership and its jurisdiction.

The member opposite complains because a member on this side critically challenged an initiative of the government at one point in time. It is our job to challenge critically from time to time, but it is the government's job to exercise leadership. It is the federal government's responsibility to address these things.