

Supply

given to the province of Ontario at the expense of other regions of this country. Do not get, shall we say, perplexed when members on this side of the floor say: Hey, we have exceptionally high unemployment in our regions. We are asking the Government of Canada to show leadership.

• (1300)

We are asking it to invite the participation of the provincial governments and the municipalities, as well as the private sector, and to initiate new programs which will assist young people this year. It is fundamental to providing some sense of hope, decency and dignity for the young people of this country, and I would hope the minister would support that.

[Translation]

Mrs. Marie Gibeau (Bourassa): Mr. Speaker, I have the privilege today to respond to the motion moved by the hon. member concerning the action taken by our government in order to reduce the unemployment rate among young Canadians. I totally agree with my hon. colleague that we need to do everything in our power to help young Canadians find a job. And I would like to specifically address the situation of our youth in the Montreal area.

Since its first election in 1984, our government has worked hard to encourage young Canadians to pursue their studies, to realize their full academic potential and, once they graduated, to find a motivating job that would represent their contribution to Canadian productivity.

Of course, the hon. member knows, as we all know, that the present economic situation is difficult, not only in Canada, but in all industrialized countries. Despite that, our youth show initiative and, far from getting discouraged, they show entrepreneurship, which will certainly have the effect of raising the standard of living of Canadians during the present decade and even during the twenty-first century.

Our government does all it can to support their efforts. Indeed, it is the seventh summer that we put in place the Challenge Program, which is under the jurisdiction of the Minister of State for Youth and whose aim is to encourage employers to create interesting summer jobs for young people. The future of young Canadians is at the forefront of government priorities. I believe we have proved it when we announced this year that \$143

million would go into the Challenge Program 91. That is \$3 million more than in last year's budget.

Also, of these \$143 million, \$28.3 million will go to Challenge 91 for Quebec. Let me explain to the hon. member the components of that program. One of the components of the Challenge Program is called Summer Employment Experience Development (SEED). It assists employers by giving them salary subsidies that will allow them to create jobs for secondary school, college and university students, but especially for secondary school students who have more difficulty than others to find a job.

The hon. member will be happy to learn that in the Montreal area, last summer, our government spent more than \$4 million under this component and, more precisely, that 2,655 students participated in 1,146 projects over-all, which allowed them to receive a valuable training while earning money to continue their education.

I am pleased to tell the hon. member that this year again, the SEED component will encourage the creation of job opportunities conforming to government social priorities in the areas of literacy, drug and alcohol abuse, information on AIDS, environment, and urban crime.

Moreover, the funding of SEED this year is aimed at encouraging employers to hire visible minorities, natives and young handicapped.

In Quebec, the funds allocated to this program will be increased this summer from \$17.8 million to \$18.1 million. My hon. friend will certainly understand that summer has just started and that we do not quite know yet how many students from Montreal schools will participate in this program. There is ground to believe that this component of Challenge 91 will have as much success as in previous summers.

The Challenge program includes also a component called Work Orientation Workshops that gives high school dropouts an opportunity to reconsider their decision to not complete their education. These workshops are accompanied by an on-the-job experience aimed at encouraging dropout students to go back to school or, if they do not want to, to receive a practical training. More precisely, these workshops teach life dynamics, personal financial management, the operation of companies, and so on. These workshops help young people to understand what training and studies they will need to get in the labour market, where jobs require more and more skills and are more specialized.