

Supply

Mr. Francis G. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate my colleague from Haldimand—Norfolk on his very good speech and on the very good work he is doing as the youth critic for our party. He gave this House a very good overview of the unemployment situation that faces young people today.

What he has said with respect to his constituency of Haldimand—Norfolk and the province of Ontario I can only echo and amplify with respect to the part of the country that I come from, which is eastern Nova Scotia. Students there are coming out of high school and university with very dim prospects for jobs.

In many of the cases it is the federal government that is most to blame. However, the support programs of the federal and provincial governments are not enabling young people to orient themselves toward a productive career in the labour market, or even to get to first base when it comes to a job leading to a career down the road.

• (1550)

I would like to invite my colleague as youth critic to amplify on his remarks, particularly those he was making at the close of his speech. I would like him to give this House an indication of some of the ideas he thinks would be most important in a progressive strategy for support and for creating the kind of climate that would enable young people to get a toe-hold in the job market, to get that first job to begin a career path that has real potential.

Perhaps my colleague would like to embellish on those remarks that he just touched on.

Mr. Speller: Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. colleague for the question. First and foremost what we are saying is that we need a minister of youth and a ministry of youth that has the resources available to actually deal with the problem of youth unemployment.

As I said, the minister was at committee today. What we see is a ministry that deals with the problem of school drop-outs. There is a good amount of money in that budget for him to deal with the stay-in-school program

and movements are being made in that direction. That is a very important role and we agree with the government in that area.

On the other side however, the one dealing specifically with giving young Canadians an opportunity for a job, the youth programs are mixed in with all the other Canada employment programs. There is no specific envelope for the government to take charge and to be able to create an environment for young people which is different from the one for the general mass of Canadians. First and foremost that would be an approach, to make sure there is a youth minister with the necessary resources whose group has specifically targeted youth unemployment.

As my hon. colleague knows, when we travelled across the country programs such as apprenticeship programs were first and foremost in young people's minds. They had heard about the apprenticeship programs in Japan, Sweden and Germany. These countries have apprenticeship programs. They use half of the resources that we do in terms of apprenticeship programs yet provide many more apprenticeship spaces and much more opportunity for young people to get into apprenticeship programs. Young Canadians were saying: "Look, an apprenticeship program will give me an opportunity in these difficult times to be able to get an education and work at the same time".

That goes also for the co-op program. I asked the minister this morning about the co-op program because the government did make a commitment in 1989 to quadruple the amount of resources going into co-operative education. He admitted at that time that the government had not come near that. That was another idea that Canadians and I felt could really go a long way in both giving young Canadians an opportunity—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I am sorry but the time for questions or comments has now expired.

[*Translation*]

Mrs. Shirley Maheu (Saint-Laurent—Cartierville): Mr. Speaker, we often hear people say that youth is the future of this country. However to have a future our young people must have the tools they need to face the