

Supply

Mr. Duhamel: I thank the hon. member for the question. I want to make sure I have understood the question because I think that my colleague was referring to the world recession in 1981-82, as opposed to the made-in-Canada recession of today, where indeed there were serious difficulties: interest rates and high unemployment. Absolutely. He failed to mention, of course, the differences in interest rates between Canada and the U.S. which recently have been at a record high. But we will set that aside for the time being.

I am amazed because I really did not simply point out the difficulties and pitfalls and some of the weaknesses of the programs. I did that because I expect that the government would want to listen to what it is that we have to say because it might be able to benefit from that. One of the main points I made is that there should be a total review of those programs to see if they are indeed in line with the government's economic and social development policies.

• (1340)

That was the first point. The second point was that there should be wide consultations in order to ensure that the review is as comprehensive, sensible and sensitive as possible. I did mention as well that it would be important to have the students involved in that kind of review.

With respect to money, because that is obviously an important consideration, we have a deficit of \$30 billion and it has been hovering around that number for a long, long time. It will soon be \$400 billion. It has more than doubled over the last seven years. I know we have a serious economic problem.

When I look at these cuts of \$69 million and I look at some of the other activities the government undertakes, I cannot help but wonder whether we would not have been able to maintain such a program. Perhaps we would have been able to enhance it.

When there was a war in the gulf, money was found to go to war. We ought to be launching war against poverty; we ought to be launching war against unemployment; we ought to be making certain that our young people have the skills and the experience so they can contribute fully to Canada. I know that is what he wants, and certainly that is what I want. That is what my party wants.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for St. Boniface and I just returned from the opening of the Assembly of First Nations conference in Winnipeg. My hon. friend comes from a province with a very large portion of aboriginal people. He will recall that just a year or so ago the government cut the funding for post-secondary education to Indians.

I would like to ask him about this. He comes from a province with a very high number of aboriginal people. I would like to ask him about the devastating impact on young aboriginal people, young Indians, young Métis, and how that is going to affect their whole outlook on life.

Mr. Duhamel: Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague for the question. I tried to address that in part. Certainly his question is much more specific.

As I pointed out, unemployment figures for people 15 to 24 years of age are, as of this May, 4.4 per cent higher compared to a year ago. There are pockets within Canada where it is alarmingly high.

I was told as recently as last night, when my hon. friend and I attended the same function in Winnipeg with respect to the outgoing Chief Erasmus, that there are unemployment figures of over 90 per cent on our reserves. How can our young aboriginal people have any hope for the future when they face such a debilitating kind of situation? *C'est écrasant, c'est extraordinaire.*

Hon. Warren Allmand (Notre-Dame-de-Grâce): Mr. Speaker, in this motion which we have put before the House, we are calling on the government to implement immediately measures to alleviate the devastatingly high rate of unemployment among Canadian youth.

If we look at the unemployment figures which came out last Friday, the rate of unemployment for youth in this country in May was 16.6 per cent. That figure covers youth who are going to return to university, to CEGEP or to college in the fall and it also includes non-student youth. The figure of 16.6 per cent is considerably higher than the 10.3 per cent which is the general unemployment rate in this country, and that is bad enough; nearly 1.5 million Canadians unemployed. However, if you break down the figure of 16.6 per cent unemployment for youth, it is 15.8 per cent for students who will return to school and to university and it is 17.4 per cent for non-student youth.