

*Supply*

This study, and I commend it to the minister, shows that none of that has happened. Despite the minister's huffing and puffing about how well he and his colleagues in cabinet and the federal government do, those things are just not happening. I will read three paragraphs from this study which show exactly what it means to these people. They are as follows:

To want to work and be unable to find it is painful at any age, but youth unemployment has particular effects, both on the individual and on society. A lengthy period of frustration and enforced idleness when a person first enters the labour force can disable him or her psychologically and in terms of experience for later employment . . . those who encounter serious difficulties in their formative years (from 16 to 24) fail to acquire the experience, training, competence and credentials that would earn them a regular job yielding a reasonable income in their adult years.

In the past society looked to its youth to be the future strength of communities. But even then too many youth were left behind. Now the problem has grown worse. The aged and aging, the training of high-tech workers and other special needs groups gain most of the attention.

Today's youth are being forgotten as we are distracted by continual economic crises and rapidly changing technology. Personal alienation and the risks of social unrest have become substantial and appear to be worsening.

That is a report of four weeks ago. Statistics, particularly as they relate to young people, bear out the grave comments in that report. Youth unemployment rates in this country are double—not just some minor percentage higher—the national average. Unemployment rates are now running close to 18 per cent for people between the ages of 16 and 24.

In 1981, although people between the ages of 16 and 24 made up only 26 per cent of the work force, they accounted for 46 per cent of the unemployed. A total of 238,000 jobs were lost between February, 1981, and March, 1982, and 52 per cent, on 118,000, were jobs held by people between the ages of 18 and 24.

When we talk about youth unemployment, it cannot be dealt with glibly by simply accusing other people of not doing the right thing. Before I outline what I think ought to be done—the minister has heard this before, but despite this he keeps saying that no one puts forward suggestions and continues not to listen—let me say that when we talk about youth unemployment we are not talking about some strange breed of people who do not belong to our society. People between the ages of 16 and 24 do want to work. They want to work for exactly the same reasons that women in our society want to work, for exactly the same reasons that handicapped people in our society want to work and for exactly the same reasons that everyone in our society wants to work.

There are three reasons. They are simple enough that even the minister can understand them. First, people need money to purchase the things they need in order to carry out their responsibilities. Second, people want to make a contribution that is not to be lost. Let me expand on that point. If you find at your very first attempt as a young person entering the work force that no door is open to you—it is not only a question of money because we have social programs which offer some money when people are unemployed—and you find there is no contribution you can make, a scar is formed which lasts a long time. Third, a first job opportunity provides a strong force in the shaping of a human personality.

People want to work, not only for money, not only to make a contribution, but to know who they are. Anyone who raises kids between the ages of 16 and 24—if I could call them kids—knows that. Outside of the question of money and contribution, the most important thing they need to know is what kind of people they are. It is probably not appropriate for me to bring in three of the Crombie children who are in that age group. But when young people are looking for employment this summer or looking at what kind of jobs they will get into in their first job in the work force, the single, most important thing they need to know is whether or not they will be able to get a job which will tell them a little bit about who they are. The kind of employment one has determines in large part the kind of person one becomes.

When we talk about youth unemployment, we are not talking about another one of the minister's statistics, nor can the question be dealt with by another one of the minister's announcements. We are dealing here with something very important because we are talking about the first time a person tries to make a connection with the community in terms of contribution, the making of money and the finding out of what kind of a person he or she is.

What is the problem with youth unemployment? It is not complicated. I might say to the minister that there are two elements to it. First, there are not enough jobs. It is that simple, and that is the first reason. There are not enough jobs in this country. The hon. member for Lethbridge-Foothills made it clear that the first thing the minister and the government should understand is that the reason we have youth unemployment is the same reason we have unemployment in every other sector of our society—there are not enough jobs.

People need jobs. That people need jobs is not a complicated theory. The record of the minister's government does not have to be recalled by me. It has been recalled by the hon. member for Lethbridge-Foothills and it will continue to be recalled by every other speaker. It is recalled in the question period daily in this House of Commons and it is mentioned from podiums right across the country. We have a government with an economic record which is the worst we have had in most people's memory, certainly since the depression of the 1930s.

• (1640)

The first problem with youth unemployment is that there are not enough jobs because the government has created an economic climate in which people will not invest. We should not miss the point that people will not invest because they do not trust the government to look after their investment. If people do not invest, we will not have jobs. The government's energy policy brought the energy industry to its knees. What it has done in the west it will now do in the east.

The manufacturing sector, which affects employment opportunities in the heartland of the country, in Ontario and Quebec, is also on its knees because of the government's record. I will not go through all the indicators. The minister wishes the boy upon the stairs would go away, but he will not