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bourhood of 30 per cent. A lot of those kids get out of school without the opportunity for a job.

What we have seen over the last little while, and the minister of youth recognized it before the committee today, is the problem of student drop-out. The fact of the matter is that a lot of money is being thrown into these programs directed toward keeping these young people in school, but it just does not seem to be working.

It is ironic that this government continues to ignore this problem. It has been covered in the papers the last little while. It is getting a lot more national attention because of the problems experienced by students in getting summer employment.

Looking at the figures from the SEED program funding over the last 10 years we see that in 1985 the government committed \$140 million to SEED funding. SEED funding is student employment in the summer-time. It gives students an opportunity to get a summer job in order to continue their education and to help them go back to school. It also gives them some sort of experience when they leave school. They can say that they have had some experience when they apply for a full-time job after leaving post-secondary education.

As I said the funding was \$149.3 million in 1985. Today it is some \$88 million. It has been cut drastically. In 1985 the number of jobs created was 94,115. Less than 53,000 jobs are being created this year by SEED funding. This is at a time when the full-time post-secondary enrolment has gone from 789,000 in 1985 to over 921,000 young people. These young people are looking for summer jobs and this has been one of the worst summers for them to do that.

That is why, as I said, the Liberal Party set up a task force. It travelled across the country. It put forward an agenda for youth policy paper in order to send it around to different youth groups and people concerned with the problems of youth to get their ideas on it.

I have had many opportunities during Question Period to question the minister on his spending priorities. As I said earlier, I had the opportunity to listen to him speak in committee today on his programs.

The minister told the committee about his stay-in-school initiative, the area on which this government has put most of its emphasis. He mentioned that no evaluation had yet been done as to its success but the figures still remain high, somewhere in the neighbourhood of 30 per cent for drop-out rates. He spoke about the Chal-

lenge program the main component of which is the Summer Employment and Experience Development Program.

• (1545)

What he did not tell this House and what he failed to say at committee today was that not only has SEED funding gone down but there has also been almost \$205 million in cuts from 1985 to 1993 in those areas dealing with youth employment opportunities.

I am very concerned about this disturbing trend of youth unemployment. We are finding that over the past few years the number of young people who have never held a first-time job is dramatically increasing. That means young people do not have the opportunity of getting some sort of apprenticeship program in a company. They are not going in at that lower level.

This disturbing trend seems to suggest that the ages keep going up for these young people. We are finding that it is not just young people in the 19 to 21-year age group who have not had an opportunity for a first-time job. What is happening is that 28 and 29-year olds have not had that opportunity either.

The government suggests there are more people working in the past couple of years since the recession, depression, or whatever one wants to call it. Even though there is a small improvement in the labour market as the government suggests, that trend is not being seen with our youth.

In fact youth unemployment is still rising. Looking at the statistics from this time last year, employment among youth has fallen some 64,000. That means young people who had those jobs are losing them. In fact in one year 64,000 fewer young people have jobs.

What we are seeing is that during the recession and the downturn the people who lost the jobs were young people. Those who actually had the jobs were young people. I say again that I do not believe this government is doing enough to help young Canadians get back to work and the statistics bear this out.

The five-year trend for chronic youth unemployment can no longer be ignored. It seems that this government has given up all hope and is just leaving it to market conditions and to the employers to get it out of this mess.

My colleague said earlier that the government cannot create jobs, that it is not really a government's job to do it and I agree. However, it is the government's job to make sure that there is an environment out there for young people to be able to get their first-time jobs.