

Supply

all." So those young people who were trying to keep the parks alive, trying to help other young people, trying to build themselves up, cannot do so. But the municipalities could take those unemployment cheques and create jobs in the field of recreation for the summer. There are so many things that could be done. It is not that there is not an answer. It is simply that there is a great waste, a great loss and a great frustration. I cannot believe, Mr. Speaker, that you have not experienced it in your riding or that there is not one Liberal MP who has not experienced the same. Take this idea that I have given you today, take the credit for it and use it. Create these real jobs in this real way. Give our young people a chance.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

Mr. André Maltais (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce): Mr. Speaker, I am quite pleased to take part in the debate this evening on the motion introduced by the official opposition, particularly since it has to do with a tremendous problem faced by young Canadians, the matter of employment. However, the motion moved by the official opposition could have been drafted quite differently, because it urges the government, and I quote:

—to . . . promote the private and public sector hiring of Canada's youth so that those attending school can afford to continue to acquire needed skills, and those graduating can immediately become productive members of the work force.

This summer we expect that about 1.2 million students will join the Canadian labour force on a temporary basis. In 1981, only 11 per cent out of roughly 1.2 million students were unable to land a job, whereas this year we expect that figure might reach 16 per cent. In other words, some 200,000 young people will be unable to find work.

However, when we read the motion, we realize that they are expressly asking the government to promote the creation of jobs in the private sector as well as in the public sector. With respect to the public sector, the Minister of Employment and Immigration has announced a \$100 million grant. So, to those who are urging the government to take the necessary assistance measures, I suggest that an amount of \$100 million does represent an incentive and is a concrete way to lend a hand to students. They can always say that it is a fair amount but that it could be larger still, and I agree. But not unlike any government or corporation, we also have budgetary limits.

One thing which really amazes me in this type of debate, Mr. Speaker, is that we hear practically the same comments on either side: we all deplore the fact that students have no summer jobs and we also deplore the fact that family heads aged 35, 40 or 50 cannot rejoin the labour force. I suppose all that stems from the legendary generosity of Members of Parliament, but all those pious wishes combined do not point to a solution. Keeping in mind the very short time at my disposal this evening, I would like hon. members to consider two possibilities which in the course of the coming months and the coming year might help us find a formula likely to enable

us to make much greater use of Canada's student and permanent manpower. The first would be to reformulate various programs and call them voluntary public service. I listened to the member who spoke before me and who, in his own words, was trying to set an objective quite similar to the one I will endeavour to describe in the next few minutes. Our young people, boys and girls, are asking for work. They do not necessarily want high wages, they want to be busy, to make a worth-while contribution to the community, but also to achieve self-fulfilment. That is what the young people want at the moment.

I remember that during four summers I was responsible for student employment on the North Shore, and most boys and girls wanted to work 32 or 42 hours a week at a reasonable salary. Those young people did not spare their efforts or their time and were anxious to share their knowledge as well as to learn. It is quite important even for employers to realize how much those young people can benefit the company. On the other hand, the company is also an excellent school for young people. At present, because of our free enterprise system, it happens that more young people will be unable to find jobs this summer. Let us keep in mind that the system is based on the fact that since we live in a free country, nothing is compulsory. Unemployment insurance and social welfare are characteristics of free countries, because in totalitarian countries, everybody would be working. Everyone is given a registration number and has to perform some duties. Then, there is no unemployment, because everybody is under state control. Thank God this is not the case in America where people are free and have free institutions. We could perhaps therefore review some programs and set up some kind of voluntary public service. And what would we do in that voluntary public service? How would it be financed? Who could belong to the managerial staff? Such a voluntary public service could be distributed throughout the country in six or seven designated areas.

• (2150)

Young people between 16 or 17 and 25 could apply for community work and benefit from contacts with native people, anglophones, francophones and other groups, and could be transferred every six months, along the lines of the methods used by countries where military service is compulsory. With this difference, that it would be a civilian volunteer service without any connection with the Armed Forces or military discipline. It is meant as an opportunity for young people to take a break from their studies, or after leaving school or giving up a job, to gain valuable experience and give society the benefit of their intelligence, energy and creativity. The volunteer service could be administrated by employees of private companies who would be seconded to the program as a contribution to the community, so that no increase in the numbers of federal personnel or of any other level of government would be necessary.