

● (1800)

[English]

LABOUR CONDITIONS—YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT LEVELS. (B)  
CRITERIA APPLICABLE TO YOUTH EMPLOYMENT FUNDS

**Mr. Gerry St. Germain (Mission-Port Moody):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in this House to speak on what is likely the most important issue facing young Canadians, old Canadians, all Canadians: unemployment. Last Tuesday the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Roberts) skilfully denied the statements made by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) in Montreal when he said that the problem of youth unemployment is not a crisis and there is no danger of losing the present generation. That attitude, Mr. Speaker, ignores the stark, cold fact of youth unemployment.

Some 18.7 per cent of our youth are unemployed and that is not acceptable. Over one third of the total number of unemployed and on unemployment insurance are youth. Statistics Canada lists 536,000 Canadian youth as unemployed and another 40,000 have given up looking for jobs. Since 1980 the number of young unemployed for a year or more has risen from 42,000 to 102,000.

In the same period the number of Canadians in the 20 to 24 years age group increased by 73,000, but the number of jobs held by youth in that age bracket decreased by 96,000. The unemployment rate among youth with secondary school certificates and university degrees has almost doubled; 13 per cent in 1983 as compared to 7.8 per cent in 1981. Why send your children to university, Mr. Speaker—to join the unemployment roles?

Across Canada the youth unemployment rates are 24 per cent in B.C., over 39 per cent in Newfoundland, 26 per cent in P.E.I., 24.9 per cent in Nova Scotia, 31.2 per cent in New Brunswick, 21.6 per cent in Quebec, 17.7 per cent in Ontario, 14.7 per cent in Manitoba, 18.4 per cent in Saskatchewan and 18.4 per cent in Alberta. This is a disaster.

As was pointed out in this House, Mr. Speaker, the statistics clearly indicate a crisis and a generation adrift. If the Minister of Finance cannot see that, his vision is lacking. This all results from the chaos of Liberal economic policies. It started several years ago, but in the West we have seen policies like the National Energy Program virtually annihilate an economy. The Minister of Finance, the Minister of Employment and Immigration, and the Government opposite, are ignoring the statistics. They are not talking of the youth and their parents who would be telling them what the real crisis of youth unemployment is. It is characteristic of the Government opposite to ignore the problems, to ignore the Canadian people, while it fixates on the Gallup polls.

The Government tries to divert our attention from the fact that it has run out of ideas. What the Liberal Party of Canada is, is a Liberal with Canadian tax dollars which he gives only to Liberals. The Minister of Employment and Immigration talks of new Liberalism. Where is his credibility? He was the Minister who personally administered the largest slush fund this country has ever seen, the Special Employment Initiatives

### *Adjournment Debate*

Program. It is a disgrace that all Canadians were not allowed to share in those funds. I would like to read this quotation by the Hon. Minister of State for Youth (Mrs. Hervieux-Payette) in her maiden address to this House as Minister:

● (1805)

What is more, young people have suffered a loss of purpose and social contact . . . all this has been at a huge social and financial loss to all Canadians. And the result, I am afraid, is that too many young people have lowered their expectations, have stopped searching for the future they want and have begun to settle for less.

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, is that not a crisis? Is that not a lost generation, a generation adrift? This was said by a Minister in this House in contradiction to the Minister of Finance. I agree with the Minister of State for Youth. She knows of the alcoholism, crime and the suicide that afflict our youth. She understands the problems that are facing our youth. Yet she gets a paltry \$150 million for youth unemployment, whereas Canadair squanders \$2.1 billion.

The story of the Government, Mr. Speaker, is total devastation to our youth and they will not recognize it. We have pleaded with them. We have suggested ideas. Mr. Speaker, I plead through you that they do something about this very crucial situation.

[Translation]

**Mr. Jean-Guy Dubois (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Mr. Speaker, as the minister has already indicated, he agrees with his colleague, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde), that such high unemployment rates among young people are entirely unacceptable.

The federal Budget of February 1984 takes into account the fact that young people are facing serious unemployment problems in spite of improved economic conditions. Consequently, the estimates for the Youth Opportunities Fund have been increased by \$150 million, which raises the total amount earmarked for employment projects intended for young people to \$1.3 billion for 1984-85.

An integrated and comprehensive concept of education, proper professional training, a working experience and a balanced combination of those elements will greatly contribute to increase the labour force participation rate of young people. Moreover, the Cabinet has recently approved an additional amount of \$30 million for the Summer Canada Program.

At present, the Department of Employment and Immigration has some \$457.9 million for youth training, \$550.3 million for the funding of direct job creation and some \$150 million for youth services such as job counselling, the Outreach Program, mobility and placing.

Employment problems are particularly serious for young dropouts with inadequate schooling.

In addition, there are considerable challenges to take up in order to prepare students to enter the labour force, to restructure the educational system and put emphasis on innovative