

So, Mr. Speaker, the solution is in dealing with the problem at its roots and avoiding having students drop out of school.

[*English*]

**Mr. Dingwall:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I do not wish to take away from the time of my colleague to the extreme left who will be speaking on debate. I just want to draw to the attention of the Chair that, under the provisions of Standing Order 43(2), for the remaining speakers from our party and for the remainder of the day we wish to divide our time equally.

**Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair):** Mr. Speaker, once more we are hearing the rhetoric about the importance of education, about the technological society and about creating a knowledge based economy in Canada. We are hearing all of the good words. What this debate is all about in the final analysis on the government side is words, words, words without substance.

It was back in February that the previous Minister of State for Youth had to suffer through the embarrassment of convening a press conference to announce the increase in funding in the Challenge program, particularly the SEED program, that this minister referred to in Question Period last week when he asserted: "No, there has been no decrease in student funding. There has indeed been an increase in student funding".

I suppose it is a question of interpretation. Let us first of all look back upon the last round of announcements with respect to the Challenge program. What we will find is that the SEED program was cut from \$118 million to \$77 million. This huge increase, bragged about by the hon. minister back in February in his former guise and now in the minister's present guise, amounted to \$3 million.

The amount for the SEED program was increased from \$77 million to \$80 million, roughly a 4 per cent increase, a considerable degree smaller than the increase in the cost of living. It is a typical kind of performance by the government to claim that there have been funding increases when in fact in terms of real dollars there have been no funding increases.

If we look back just a little further, we will find that when this government came into office it decreased from

### *Supply*

the very outset the amount of money available to students.

However, what is so shameful about the February announcement is that even back in February it was possible to predict exactly what has occurred now, and that is that the unemployment rate among those defined as youth has hit the level of almost 16 per cent. We have had steadily increasing rates of unemployment in the over-all population exceeding 10 per cent since before February, and anybody who has made any attempt to relate the pattern of unemployment among youth with over-all unemployment will have discovered that by the time this is over the rate of unemployment among youth will double that of the adult rate.

This government had plenty of warning, lots of warning, that there was going to be the kind of situation that has been produced now, a situation in which the reality is that a lot of students are simply not going to get jobs. If all the students were former ministers of state for finance and trade, perhaps they could get jobs in the summer. Patronage might apply to them or something of the sort might provide them jobs. In other words, what we have is a situation on the other side where there has been a consistent disregard for the real situation among young people.

You may recall, Mr. Speaker, that in previous debates on the Challenge program we expressed some considerable concern about the change in proportions of Challenge to the SEED program that was being used to fund jobs in industry and in the business area, the profit area, as compared to the non-profit area. I am saying that now it is to cite the fact that federal funding can create a lot more jobs, even in a recession, if it addresses the needs that have been created by this government in its recession among non-profit organizations which are trying to serve the communities affected by the recession, the unemployment and the hopelessness that have been created by this government.

We heard the hon. Minister of State for Youth talking about how terrible it was that 30 per cent of kids drop out of school in Canada. And it is a terrible thing. However, I do not know how he can stand there and say it is a terrible thing and yet create a situation where the dropout rate is going to increase because of kids not being able to fund their way back into school next fall. He did not say anything about the dropout rate that is