

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, May 24, 1984

The House met at 11 a.m.

● (1105)

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

BUSINESS OF SUPPLY

ALLOTTED DAY, S.O. 62—NON-CONFIDENCE MOTION—YOUTH
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Hon. John Wise (Elgin) moved:

That this House condemns the continuing failure of the Government's policies to restore even pre-recession levels of employment opportunities for young people at a time when hundreds of thousands of young Canadians are about to join the labour force from our schools and universities and Canada's unemployment rate for young adults remains the highest of any western industrial nation.

He said: Mr. Speaker, I welcome this opportunity to lead off debate on an extremely important matter facing all governments, whether they be municipal, provincial or the federal Liberal Government we have in office at the present time. I am sure everyone would agree that one of the most critical challenges facing Canadian society, our business and industrial labour leaders, politicians at all levels, is that of youth unemployment. I am sure everyone would agree as well that how this challenge is met will shape the character of Canadian society for decades to come. Because of this challenge, and because of the deep concern we have for the fact that the present Liberal Government has not been able to deal adequately with the problem of youth unemployment, my colleagues and I have utilized one of those rare occasions we have today to put this motion before the House.

I think it would be interesting to examine and compare the record of this Government and that of the last Conservative Government in 1979-80. During that nine-month period in which we were in office we created jobs at the rate of 7,000 per month, for a total of some 60,000 jobs. In the 49 months since the election of this particular government, we find that it did not create jobs, that in fact the number of young people employed decreased by nearly 300,000. During the nine months we were in office we created jobs at the rate of some 7,000 a month, and during the period of time this Government has been in office it has decreased the number of jobs by 7,000 per month.

Official statistics indicate that at the present time we have some 525,000 to 550,000 young Canadians out of work. Indeed, if we examine some of the statements by the Minister of State for Youth (Mrs. Hervieux-Payette), who unfortunately is not in the House, and neither is the present Minister of

Employment and Immigration (Mr. Roberts)—I hope their schedules will permit them to join us before the—

Mr. Blais: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Cabinet is meeting this morning, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. McGrath: That is not a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Order, please.

Mr. McGrath: Have you been blackballed, J.J.?

Mr. Crosby: They kicked him out for leaking that document.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Hon. Members also know that it is not in order to reflect on the presence or otherwise of Members in the House.

Mr. Deans: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I personally apologize to the Hon. Member who has the floor. I would not have risen, but Cabinet or not, the House of Commons sits on Thursday mornings.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Wise: Mr. Speaker, if we—

● (1110)

Mr. Lang: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. The Minister of State for Youth (Mrs. Hervieux-Payette) is presently on a speaking engagement in Montreal. She is travelling back and will be here this afternoon.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): It is not orderly to reflect on the presence of Members in the House of Commons, nor is it useful for the House proceedings to determine where Members are across the country.

Mr. Wise: Mr. Speaker, I hope that exchange will not be taken off my time.

If we examine some of the statements which are being made across the country, and they are few and far between, by the Minister of State for Youth, we will find that she has actually admitted to the fact that the true number of unemployed young adults in the country is close to 700,000 rather than 550,000. There are about 1.2 million young Canadians in colleges and universities in the country. Within the next 10 days those young Canadians will be leaving schools, universities and other institutions of learning. A conservative estimate would be that approximately 50 per cent of those people will be joining the summer workforce. We could add 600,000 to that 700,000 and, if we did a bit of mathematical calcula-