

*Supply**[English]*

Summer employment funding from 1985 to 1990, we recognize that the program has been reduced, cut, call it what you like, there is less money, from \$149 million to \$77 million, a cut of \$69 million.

It is true that in February of this year the former Minister of State for Youth said: "Because of difficult economic times", referring to the recession, "we will put in another \$3 million". It is not particularly difficult to put in \$3 million when you have already cut a program by almost \$70 million.

I could reduce all of my employees' wages by one-half, which is approximately the cut, and then give them a 3 or 4 per cent increase, and I am sure that they would not be particularly impressed.

What has been the result of all of this? There were 40,115 fewer jobs than in 1985, if one compares the 1990 total with that of 1985. In fact, there were fewer jobs in 1990 than there were in the year 1985. The average length of those jobs was 9.5 weeks in 1990 and the average wage was \$6.10 per hour. That gives you the grand total, possibly, of roughly \$2,300 per summer job per student. If you look at the increase in tuition fees that I have been mentioning, add no changes in student aid since 1984, increases in rent and all of their amenities of life, the 3 per cent administrative fee, the GST on various goods and what have you, clearly these students are working in an extremely difficult environment.

There has also been another problem that we have not yet talked about and we must address it. Initially, the intent was to have career-oriented jobs to really help with the learning, to help develop certain skills, to refine them if you wish, to make them more marketable, more competitive. Well, unfortunately, a lot of that has slipped by the wayside, and we do not have the same focus, we do not have the same commitment, or, at least, the intended results are not being produced. That is really unfortunate.

Let me just give another figure. If you look at the wages today and compare them with those of 1985 you see an increase of 12 per cent. So, if one looks at inflation during that period of time, roughly 20 per cent, there has been a net decrease in wages for students.

Now let us look at the unemployment statistics. They are in the range of 20 per cent. If one compares May of this year with May of last year, there is 4.4 per cent more student unemployment this year in the 15 to 24 year-old range, which is really unfortunate. Of course, the 20 per cent range camouflages a whole lot of things because in areas such as Montreal and, I suspect, Newfoundland and the Territories, it is probably a whole lot higher.

What is needed? A complete review of this program and all student-related programs is needed in order to ensure that they respond to student needs in terms of economic and social development priorities. We need wide input and we need to involve the students.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, I don't deny that the government made a number of efforts. Yet we have to ask the basic question: Do we meet student needs? If our young men and women loose hope, if they begin to think that they can no longer find jobs and that they can no longer hope for a promising future, I think that Canada and all Canadians are losing something.

[English]

Let us make sure that our young men and women of this nation are, in fact, the priority, that there are jobs, meaningful and significant jobs, to help them develop their skills, their abilities, their potential. Let us make sure that they do not despair, that they get the learning experiences that they need in order to make a contribution to this country.

Mr. John E. Cole (York—Simcoe): Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the previous speaker, the member for St. Boniface, a question as it relates to the situation back in the early eighties when unemployment was extremely high in this country, along with an inflation rate that was rapidly increasing, and bank interest rates were very, very high.

This motion before us really does not give any alternative or make any particular suggestions other than to condemn the good work that is being done. In light of this, I would like to ask the member for St. Boniface if he has some suggestions, maybe reflecting on his experiences in the early eighties, as to how to improve the present unemployment situation. What particular things would this member like to see happening for Canadian youth in the employment sector?