

**Miss MacDonald:** They are directly responsible because that is the party in this House which joined together with the Liberal Party to defeat the previous government and to bring in those policies which have contributed to the highest unemployment this country has experienced since the years of the depression.

I would like to direct attention to the motion before us for debate today which states:

That this House condemns the government for the economic mismanagement which has led directly to the loss of 300,000 jobs since August 1981 and produced a crisis situation for students seeking summer or permanent employment—

● (2030)

I want to repeat that last part:

—produced a crisis situation for students seeking summer or permanent employment—

We are into this debate today because a crisis situation exists in the country. The crisis is this. There are some 475,000 young Canadians between the ages of 16 and 24 who are without work today. Of that 475,000, there are some 200,000 students coming out of schools and universities who are unable to find jobs at this time.

They are spread across the country. They are in towns, villages and cities in every part of this great land of opportunity, but there is no opportunity for them this summer. They cannot find jobs. They have come out of school, college or university looking for jobs which will enable them to return this autumn to follow their studies. They are either looking for summer jobs, or they have graduated and are looking for permanent employment. They can find neither.

There are 200,000 students without jobs. There are 475,000 young people altogether without jobs. If they were to congregate in one spot, come together in one massive group from across the country, I am sure even this government would recognize the magnitude of the crisis which confronts us. Perhaps it would be more responsive than it has been so far in today's debate. What we are facing is not just a major problem for young people throughout the summer, but a massive blow to the development of our society if these young people cannot get back into the educational system this autumn.

I used the word "crisis", and I used it deliberately. The motion uses the word "crisis". That is what youth unemployment is all about in this summer of 1982. It is worse than last year and the year before. Job prospects for young people in Canada today are worse than at any time in our country's history. That is not an exaggeration. That, sadly, is a fact.

The point of this debate today is to ask ourselves how this situation came about and what, if anything, can be done at this late stage in the spring of 1982 to improve the situation in the months immediately ahead of us. As a number of my colleagues have stated in this debate, the current high unemployment is a direct result of the economic uncertainty and instability that characterizes Canada today. Government policies have created that climate of uncertainty and anxiety. As a result, investors no longer feel confident that development can

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move ahead in Canada. Confidence has been lost, creativity has been stifled and, as a result, jobs are not being created.

A number of members in the Liberal Party are beginning to recognize that their government's policies such as the National Energy Program, the budget, high interest rates, are not working, that they are wrong.

The policies which the federal government brought in, whether emanating from the budget or because of the high interest rate policies or the National Energy Program, are combining to produce unemployment, not jobs. These policies ensure that students will not have jobs this summer. Fortunately, Liberal backbenchers are beginning to realize the reality of these facts, but the Liberal cabinet still refuses to do so.

Earlier today I pointed out to the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) that data had been made available to Liberal backbenchers which shows that unemployment is going to get worse in the months ahead. That is a startling fact to read. It must have come as a startling revelation to those members of the Liberal backbenches who were handed this information.

I asked the minister if he had had this data made available to him and had it analysed and, if so, had he begun to produce programs that would stimulate job creation. I asked whether he had taken that data to see what could be done and whether he could come up with policies and programs to stimulate new job creation.

I do not expect the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) to be able to do all of this himself. More than any other person, he has to have the co-operation of the Minister of Finance. That is why I raised this point with him. What was the response of the Minister of Finance? He adamantly refused to answer the question. He wants to stick with the policies he now has, even though the impact of those policies has been so severe on the labour force across this country.

In some ways, one might compare the labour force of this country to a giant bellows which expands and contracts at regular periods throughout the year. The tragedy is that it has been contracting more and more since last summer and there has been no expansion. Since last August, 300,000 jobs have disappeared from the labour force. Not only have those jobs disappeared, but there has not been the seasonal expansion one normally sees in the spring and summer which alleviates unemployment, making it possible for students coming out of school and university to find jobs.

The policies of the government have brought about a prolonged contraction of the labour force. Hundreds of thousands of workers have lost their jobs since last summer. These are permanent workers out of the work force. Young people pouring out of our schools, colleges and universities at this time of the year have to line up behind those already unemployed. Unfortunately, they stand little or no chance of getting into the work force this summer, unless some dramatic move is made now by all levels of government to deal with this critical situation.