

*Oral Questions*

made reference, that the Government is not going to include anything in its forthcoming budget to address the most important major problem in the country at this time?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Madam Speaker, the Hon. Member should know by this time that it is very unwise to try to base a question about Government policy on a quote from a newspaper story. I did not give any such quote. I did not say that we would not do anything to help. In fact, in the meeting I had with the students this morning, the purpose of the meeting was to discuss and decide how we could work together in a common fashion to deal with what is a very serious and major priority of the Government, and should be of this country, that is, to help young people get jobs, and to go back to work.

I point out for the information of the Hon. Member that for this year we have increased our funding for summer student employment by over 40 per cent. That is a very clear sign and indication that we do have summer employment for young people as a very high priority. In the meantime, members of this caucus have been working for several months on developing other kinds of options and initiatives that could be examined as part of an undertaking that we can put forward as a way of helping young people get jobs. I both discount the story and the Member's question.

## STUDENT SUMMER EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM—STRATEGY FOR YOUTH

**Mr. Tom McMillan (Hillsborough):** Madam Speaker, the Minister can discount my question, but he cannot discount the fact that there are 600,000 Canadians between the ages of 15 and 24 without work. The Government's 1983 student summer employment program, to which the Minister made reference, will create only 70,000 jobs, when the need is for ten times that number. Moreover, those jobs are only temporary. They do nothing to provide students and other youth with on the job training for more permanent skilled work. In light of that, will the Minister give serious consideration to the urgings of the Canadian Federation of Students, with whom he met today, that the Government's band-aid, ad hoc approach to job creation be replaced with a strategy for youth employment geared more to creating permanent skilled work of the sort that these students very much need and want?

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Madam Speaker, I am very surprised at the question of the Hon. Member. If he had taken the time, and perhaps the interest, to have read the material that we put out concerning the summer employment program, he would recognize that a large portion of that program is dedicated to the internship strategy which combines work and training. We offer direct grants to private employers, non-profit organizations and federal agencies to combine training over a period of two to three years with the direct summer work program. All the Member's question demonstrates it that he does not know what that summer youth employment program contains. Before coming to this House to ask questions, the Member

should take the time to inform himself so that he can ask questions based upon what is, and not on what he thinks the program to be.

## FUNDING FOR TRAINING

**Mr. Tom McMillan (Hillsborough):** Madam Speaker, my final supplementary question is for the same Minister. The students themselves are very familiar with the details of those programs. They are aware, too, of the inadequacies of them, and of the fact that they are faced with unemployment the likes of which we have never before seen in this country. They are also aware of the fact that the Minister's Government is slapping its six and five restraint program on funding for universities and community colleges. In light of that, would the Minister tell the House and, through this House, the young people of the country, why the Government is choosing to slash expenditures in the areas of training and education when those two things constitute such an important part of any rational, vital approach to youth unemployment? Why is the Government slashing funding in the very areas of public policy which are necessary to turn this tragedy around?

• (1420)

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Employment and Immigration):** Madam Speaker, the topic we are addressing is unquestionably a very serious one. That is why it is disappointing that the Hon. Member would again provide information which is inaccurate.

When he talks about the so-called slashing of programs, the Hon. Member does not realize that we added 20 per cent to the training program in this year alone. Our budget went from \$800 million to over \$1 billion. We are providing training programs for over a quarter of a million Canadians. In that training program, Madam Speaker, we are providing, under the Skills Growth Fund, direct investment to community colleges in the Hon. Member's own Province, which is enabling them to modernize their facilities and equipment substantially in order to provide new training positions in high technology areas for the offshore industries and the marine industries. Once again, Madam Speaker, what we are facing is an Opposition which simply does not know what is going on.

## LACK OF TYPING SPEED—TRAINING OF WOMEN

**Mrs. Jennifer Cossitt (Leeds-Grenville):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Minister of Employment and Immigration. I hope he will answer my question a little more positively. Numerous women in the service industries are losing their jobs. Through industrial retraining programs they are trying to upgrade their skills for other work, particularly in the word processing field. But, even when eligible for a word processing course, they cannot qualify because they lack the required 50 words per minute typing speed, and there are no typing courses available. Will the Minister look into this gap in the training program and see what can be done to help those caught in this particular situation?