

tion I should like to direct my question to the Minister of Finance, who is one of the few ministers in the House at the present time. Since April, when university students finished their studies, there have been 94,000 fewer young people employed in Canada. It is also apparent that the sole reason youth unemployment is remaining relatively stable is that students simply are not entering the labour market; in short they are giving up. Given this situation, is the minister willing to recommend to the government re-evaluation of the student summer employment program so that students will be encouraged to enter the labour market and thereby accumulate the savings required to return to school next year?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): No, Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Hnatyshyn: Mr. Speaker, the minister answered with his usual arrogance, as demonstrated last night.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

● (1410)

Mr. Hnatyshyn: I want to ask the minister a question. In view of the fact that Statistics Canada noted today the continually declining participation rates among young women in Canada which is now around 3.1 per cent, does the minister not realize that lack of savings among this group and any accompanying deferment of education among them can only lead to social inequities in access to higher education, and, if he realizes this situation, is he not willing to concede that this government's student employment strategy requires a complete and immediate review?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I should point out to the hon. gentleman that with regard at least to those young people who will be reentering university in the fall their student summer employment earnings, as well as other financial means, are taken into account. If it happens that a student has not been able to augment his earnings sufficiently during the summer, he will be entitled to supplemental assistance under the Canada Student Loan Program.

PROPOSAL TO CHANGE BASIS ON WHICH LOANS AVAILABLE TO STUDENTS TO ACTUAL EARNINGS

Mr. Ray Hnatyshyn (Saskatoon-Biggar): On July 8 the minister was asked, with respect to the provisions of the Canada student loan plan which bases the loans available not on the actual earnings but on the length of time students are available for work, if he will take steps to have the basis of the plan changed to actual earnings as defined under the Income Tax Act. In view of the fact that he has now had some notice and the opportunity to look into the matter, can he now report to the House if he is prepared to take steps recommended at the time?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, I just indicated that the present provisions of the Canada Student Loan Program take recognition of the problem.

Oral Questions

REQUEST FOR LEGISLATION TO LESSEN BURDEN OF STUDENTS UNABLE TO FIND SUMMER EMPLOYMENT

Mr. Paul Dick (Lanark-Renfrew-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of Finance. Recent reports of Statistics Canada have revealed that we are now experiencing the worst record of youth unemployment since statistics were accumulated in 1953, and furthermore, the national and Ontario union of students fears that student unemployment this summer is already running at 20 per cent to 25 per cent and that this could increase. Does the minister have any indication if student unemployment is as high as the national union of students suspects and, if it is, is the minister prepared to introduce emergency legislation to lessen the burden of students who will be unable to find work this summer?

Hon. Donald S. Macdonald (Minister of Finance): I will be glad to make inquiries to see whether those figures are soundly based.

Mr. Dick: As the Minister of Finance does not seem to know what the unemployment situation is, perhaps I might ask him a supplementary question. A cut-back in the student summer unemployment program was introduced under the guise of restraint. A high level of student unemployment this summer will undoubtedly result in either the deferment of post-secondary enrollment for some individuals or an increased demand for Canada student loans for others, which is not a saving to the federal government. On June 16, the national union of students—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. If the hon. member has a supplementary question, would he put it.

Mr. Dick: I would ask the minister whether he could confirm in unambiguous terms to the national union of students that he is willing to remove the requirement of summer savings in order that students will be able to get Canada student loans to continue their education?

Mr. Macdonald (Rosedale): I have just responded to that question in my reply to the hon. member for Saskatoon-Biggar.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: You did not respond at all.

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THE CANADIAN ECONOMY

SUGGESTED DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL PROGRAM TO DEAL WITH UNEMPLOYMENT AND CONSULTATION WITH PROVINCES

Mr. Edward Broadbent (Oshawa-Whitby): Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Minister of Finance. Given the fact that the Supreme Court has decided that the federal government has constitutional authority to deal with inflation on a national basis,—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Broadbent:—foolish as the particular program may be, can the minister say whether the government will consider the development of a national program to deal