

I was extremely supportive of that program since it fell in line with certain recommendations made in the report of the Task Force on Employment Opportunities for the 80s, a report made by a task force of which I was chairman in 1980 and 1981. By the way, those recommendations were given unanimous support by all members of the task force.

The Minister cancelled First Chance and replaced it with the Youth Training Option Program, a similar but more limited program. Instead of providing \$100 million in its first year, the Minister received only \$27 million to carry out that program. Instead of it being a permanent program, it was to be a pilot project. This has happened despite all the rhetoric and promises made during the election campaign with respect to training and employment.

The Minister explained to me that she had an obligation to consult with provinces, business and labour. My answer to that is twofold, Mr. Speaker. First, the fact that the Minister had to withdraw the First Chance Program and put in place a pilot project and consult further was an admission that she and the Government had no plans or blueprints for training when they made these promises during the election campaign. They were going to start from scratch and develop a program through consultation.

Second, why was it necessary to consult all over again as if nothing had been done before? I would like to point out that since 1980 there have been approximately 10 task forces and commissions dealing with this very subject, eight of which have reported. I can refer to some of them.

There was the Task Force on Employment Opportunities for the 80s, the Dodge Commission Report, a Report called *In the Chips* which dealt with employment in the micro-electronics industry, two reports by the Economic Council of Canada on this subject, the Commission for Part-time Work, the Commission for Paid Educational Leave, the Major Projects Task Force, the Task Force on Employment Outreach Programs and the Michelle Jean Report from Quebec. Those reports were presented in the last five years and were all on the same subject. They involved much consultation with all the groups the Minister indicates she will consult.

● (1815)

In addition, the Conservative Party had its own task force in 1983-84 under the chairmanship of the Hon. Member for Calgary West (Mr. Hawkes). That task force consulted broadly and published a report which included recommendations with respect to training on the job.

Now is the time for action with respect to training on the job and employment programs for young people. It is not a time for further study. I strongly urge the Government to move ahead and provide hope to young people who are unemployed and need training. It should be done now, and we should not have to wait for further studies and consultation.

[Translation]

Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Employment and Immigration): Mr. Speaker, on behalf

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of the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald), I am pleased to explain to the Hon. Member why this government has introduced the \$27 million Youth Training Option Program. This government has said on many occasions that it was committed to do something about the tragic lot of unemployed youths. The Youth Training Option is a new approach to the problem. The Hon. Member claims that this approach has been examined and tried many times. That is not true. A similar program is in force in the United Kingdom and has proved to be a resounding success. The Youth Training Option is similar to the British program, but the fact is that the idea has never been implemented in Canada.

When the Minister announced the program, she said that it was a pilot project. We would rather not spend too much of the taxpayers' money on a program which has yet to be tested. I might remind the Hon. Member that, last May, the previous government had announced a \$30 million experimental program called Youth Training Option. In any case, during the election campaign that experimental program was suddenly replaced by another \$1 billion program called First Chance, despite the fact that the original Youth Training Option never did get off the ground and that there were no consultations with the provinces.

As the previous government knew very well, the \$1 billion was never made available. No one knew how that \$1 billion would be financed in 1985-86. Our government would rather not follow that example. The Minister will meet with her provincial colleagues and consult them to make sure that any federal program aimed at reducing youth unemployment meshes with any proposed or existing provincial initiative. Businesses and unions will also be consulted so as to ensure their support and cooperation. The only way to find effective solutions to fight against youth unemployment is to work with all sectors of the Canadian economy.

The Youth Training Option will be launched immediately to provide training and practical work experience for 3,000 or 4,000 young Canadians. With the cooperation of the provinces, businesses and unions, we will be able to help more young men and women. We do not want to act irresponsibly nor promise something we as a government cannot deliver. Should we find out that the program does work, and once we know the provinces, businesses and unions agree, we will make a huge joint effort which will undoubtedly meet the requirements of the Canadian labour market and those of young Canadians.

Now, in answer to the Hon. Member who asked: Why consult? If we are to set up a joint and coherent program with the provinces, other federal agencies, municipalities, unions and what have you, consultation has to be the order of the day. In that respect, I must say that the previous government was not much in favour of consultation.