

Supply

[English]

Mr. Nickerson: Mr. Speaker, I would like to compliment the Hon. Member for Shefford (Mr. Lapierre) for a very interesting presentation. I have one question to ask him. I would disagree to a certain extent with his observation that the high level of youth unemployment is something that is very new. In my opinion, it is a matter that has simply become very much worse in the last year or so and the problem really goes back several years to the late 1970s.

The response of the Government at that time was to engage in these make-work programs—the alphabet soup programs. The problem was not alleviated and got worse year by year, culminating in what we have seen in the last year and at present. Again the response of the Government has been more of the alphabet soup, make-work programs. It does not seem to be working.

Has the Government Party given any thought to how it can get away from this make-work scheme where the taxpayers' money has to be paid out? It seems that we are on a roller-coaster with no end to it. Has any thought been given to the long-term solution of what appears to be a structural problem of youth unemployment in Canada?

[Translation]

Mr. Lapierre: Mr. Speaker, I was quite pleased to hear the comments made by the Hon. Member for Western Arctic (Mr. Nickerson) because in closing my remarks, I called for the establishment of a special parliamentary committee which would precisely be given the mandate to deal with the problems of young Canadians and which could at the same time review the host of existing programs in this field. I think there is a total of 82 programs which directly or indirectly affect young Canadians and I believe it would be a very valuable exercise to sit down and review all of them, to estimate their value and to verify whether their existence is still justified in today's society. Obviously, this host of programs did not solve the problem, and that is why I would very much welcome the co-operation of the Hon. Member and of the Government. Indeed, I know all Hon. Members share my concern in these problems, but we must examine the whole matter of young Canadians' opportunities for the future. I know the Hon. Minister of Employment and Immigration is studying this question within his mandate, but it seems to me that the social aspect of this matter should be the responsibility of all Members of Parliament, and I would hope that we can count on the co-operation of all Members. Of course, even the implementation of some 52 new programs would not necessarily solve the fundamental problem, but I think at this point we can count on the co-operation of the Hon. Member for Western Arctic, and I hope other Members will join us in calling for such a committee. In this way, the problems of the young would be drawn to our attention and we would be forced to think about them in a global way, to re-examine all budgetary items allocated within various programs which are—

● (1250)

[English]

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge-Foothills): Mr. Speaker, I rise on this New Democratic Party Opposition Day to join with Members of the NDP in condemning the Government on behalf of the youth of this country. You will note that the NDP has framed its motion to restrict criticism to condemning the tragic implications of the monetarist policies adopted by the Liberal Government. You will note from my comments, Mr. Speaker, that I will go well beyond restricting criticism to the monetarist policies. In fact, I will condemn the economic, social and fiscal policies of this Government.

I agree the Government has clearly botched the governing of this country. Let us look at the basics. Canada has a small population and we have tremendous resources over which, by the grace of God, we have stewardship. One must then look at the way in which the Government over the last 15 years has botched its stewardship of governing. It has not put in place policies which ensure that our small populace have work and satisfying careers.

I agree with the NDP that the Government has clearly botched its job. The Government has lost touch with reality. It has lost touch with the economic reality of Canada in global terms. It has so concentrated its efforts on internal conflicts, whether with the Government of Quebec, the Government of Alberta, or within the social classes of our country, and on its view of centralizing power, that the Government has forgotten that the primary role we have in this House is to deal with international affairs. If it were not for the Progressive Conservative Party and the New Democratic Party allocating Opposition Days to discuss international affairs, the subject would never be discussed. Yet if you look at our Constitution, our prime responsibility is to deal with international affairs, international trade and defence matters. We never talk about them.

If we were to concentrate on what Canada should be doing in the world, this small population of 24 million people should be working flat out. No doubt people all over the world need our resources. They need to have the benefit of our many many generations of political stability, economic development and general maturity. Canada should be providing capital to the world. Can you imagine, Mr. Speaker, the capital which 24 million Japanese would generate from the resources we have? Can you imagine the capital that 24 million Germans would generate? Canada would then be a source of wealth to the world. But instead, what are we doing? We are begging on our knees for money from Germany, Japan the the United States. By having to borrow that money we are competing against Third World countries, which in turn drives up interest rates. We are hurting that Third World countries far more than we need to. It is the same with energy. We are competing with Third World countries for energy. Canada should be a source of energy.

The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) gets a lot of praise in some branches of the media for his high international reputation. I can tell you, Mr. Speaker, that the people to whom I