

*Borrowing Authority Act*

one province to another without too much administrative red tape.

Access to education and mobility are some of the national objectives for education which the government has already mentioned and which should be given special attention. When the time comes to renegotiate its arrangements for established programs financing, I hope the federal government's considerations will go beyond the funds it intends to grant and the use that will be made of such funds, and will seek ways to implement its national objectives on education and above all, to meet the vital needs of Canadian youth. I think young Canadians are sick and tired of hearing about federal-provincial discussions on education, and that they really have the impression they are going to get the short end of the stick, that our overriding concern is not necessarily their future development and that we are far more interested in sparring with statistics. I feel we should never forget the initial objective of these programs, which is to meet the future needs of young Canadians and Canadian society.

It is appropriate to consider education and employment together, because this matter is important to both young people and society in general. The House is well aware of this, having established a committee whose work culminated in a report on employment opportunities for the eighties. The report provides a wealth of information, but unfortunately, some readers have concluded that the authors were in favour of a choice of courses that would be basically determined by labour market requirements. I earnestly hope this was not the intention of the members of the committee, because I feel that the aim of education should be to develop the person and not merely to turn out competent workers.

Several years ago, when France and Sweden started to reform their education system in order to make it better suited to labour market requirements, the students protested, and rightly so. They did not want a curriculum of courses that concentrated on certain specific occupations, because they were afraid they would then be obliged, come what may, to accept a job that would subsequently be very difficult to leave, thus restricting their mobility. They preferred a general education which would develop their minds and skills in various areas and not just turn out workers. I think this is also what young Canadians want, so that they can live their own lives instead of merely earning a living. Today, that is a possibility, because the system has changed and education is now considered to be a process that can and should go on throughout our lives and not only during our youth. Anyone who has seen the ever-expanding number of adult education programs and evening courses in every possible field, will have realized that education has become everyone's concern. That is why I want to make this reservation so that people will not think the Government of Canada is only interested in manpower planning for specific requirements and has forgotten the more general aspects of education. Before going on to another

subject, I would like to give a few Canadian statistics on young people and employment, which, unfortunately, may make this group lose some of its motivation, enthusiasm and idealism, because the economic reality is very harsh for this group in society. In 1981, more than two thirds of those in the 15 to 24 years age group were in the labour market, 87 per cent had jobs and 13 per cent were unemployed.

Among those who are employed, who are in fact lucky to be able to get work, about 25 per cent have strictly part-time jobs and 21 per cent are obliged to make do with such jobs because they are unable to find full-time work. This gives some impression of the underemployment problem among young people, who are more severely affected in this respect than their elders, while females are even worse off than males. According to OECD statistics, part-time work is becoming increasingly popular in Finland, Ireland and Italy, and less than 10 per cent of jobs are part-time. In Denmark, Norway, Sweden and the United Kingdom, however, this percentage is over 40 per cent. We know that groups where labour market representation has increased faster than in any other group over the past decades, namely, women and young people, that these are the groups that have been most severely affected by unemployment. It is, however, encouraging to know that here in Canada at least, education still opens many doors. The unemployment rate among university graduates is 7 per cent, which is three times less than among young people with eight years of schooling or less.

● (2050)

In other words, the unemployment rate among young people with eight years of schooling or less is now 21 per cent, which is completely unacceptable for a new entrant on the labour market who must often leave his family and finds himself dependent upon society, because of which he loses all his illusions and all his enthusiasm. In view of all these figures, I believe that the government will use the funds it will borrow under the terms of this legislation to develop programs for young Canadians, and it is in this spirit—I know that the hon. member may not like this subject and that it may not be important to him, but in that case, I want to tell him that I intend to defend these groups in our society and that if he is not interested, he can turn off his earphones.

It is interesting to note what graduates think of the education they have received. A survey conducted in 1978 among 1976 graduates shows that two years after they had completed their post-secondary education, the number of unemployed and underemployed college graduates was not as high as that of university graduates since 42 per cent of the latter compared to 66 per cent of college graduates had a job directly related to their training. A quarter of all graduates admitted that they had chosen the wrong career, which is a very high percentage, and about 45 per cent of them planned on taking other courses.