

*Oral Questions***YOUTH EMPLOYMENT**

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of State for Youth.

There are many nervous young people out there who cannot find jobs. I want to say to the Minister of State for Youth that since 1989 the number of Canadians who have never held a first-time job has increased by 51 per cent, from 367,000 to 556,000. Over 500,000 young Canadians are looking for a first-time job and cannot find it.

When will the minister come forward with specific job creation programs to put these young Canadians to work?

• (1425)

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Minister of State (Youth) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Mr. Speaker, as you will recall, we had the occasion last week to debate this issue following a motion by my hon. friend. Obviously he did not listen to the debate and what we had to say.

We have explained the numerous initiatives taken by the government, notwithstanding the attempts by the opposition to try and stop the legislation that we tried to put in place in order to control the debt, put the economy back in shape so that our young people in Canada, our future, can have all the opportunities they deserve.

Mr. Bob Speller (Haldimand—Norfolk): Mr. Speaker, the minister is still talking about inaction. We are near the end of the school year and the minister knows that hundreds of thousands of young Canadians are looking for summer jobs to be able to continue their education. At the same time the government has cut in half funding for summer employment initiatives from \$205 million in 1985 to only \$101 million today.

Why is the minister, at a time of such great need, cutting this funding in half?

Hon. Pierre H. Cadieux (Minister of State (Fitness and Amateur Sport) and Minister of State (Youth) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons): Again, Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend either refuses to admit facts or tries to play partisan politics.

The program for summer employment for this summer has been increased by \$5.1 million.

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[*Translation*]

THE ECONOMY

Hon. Audrey McLaughlin (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Finance. It is increasingly obvious that the reason the government is unable to reduce the deficit and the debt is its own policies. It lacks something fundamental: low unemployment.

When will the government decide to do what it must to change its policies in order to achieve what is essential for any economic recovery: low unemployment?

[*English*]

Hon. Don Mazankowski (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is not really following the progress that has been made on the expenditure reduction track.

When the government came into office we had experienced 15 years of annual program expenditure increases of about 14 per cent. We have brought that down to a level of around 4 per cent, or less than the rate of inflation. Putting it another way, when we came into office the government of the day was spending \$1.33 for every dollar's worth of revenue that was taken in. Obviously that could not be sustained.

The hon. member should look at what we have done. We have shaved some \$118 billion worth of expenditures. Had we not taken that action, instead of having a \$34 billion deficit today, we would have had an \$82.5 billion deficit.

In conclusion, I must say—

Some hon. members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Mazankowski: Yes, Mr. Speaker, if we had not taken the action, if we had gone merrily on our way, spending in the old Liberal and NDP tradition, we would have had a deficit of \$82.5 billion today.

Mr. Fontana: What kind of arithmetic is that?

Mr. Mazankowski: I say to the hon. member that the initiatives we took—