

The Budget—Mr. Roberts

adults who are not literate or adequately prepared for work. According to the last study done by UNESCO, something close to one Canadian adult in four has less than grade nine functional skills. Thus I share the national advisory Panel's sense of the importance and urgency of tackling literacy problems in Canada.

I accept the conclusion of the panel that we should focus on the problems of those who require skill development because of industrial obsolescence. I also believe that the report underlines the need to rethink the compartmentalization which bedevils the discussion of these problems. Education, training, skills development, paid leave, work and meaningful activity are not terms to be rigidly defined and pigeon-holed away from each other. They are, rather, themes that intermingle and require co-operation and flexibility among government, educational institutions, the private sector and labour if they are to be properly managed.

The fact that the Government of Canada will be spending \$1.3 billion in job training and employment programs for young people in 1984-85 shows how seriously we are committed to helping them become established in meaningful careers. It is a personal social and economic disaster that young people today make up almost half of the unemployed, with an unemployment rate double that of the adult population. We cannot ignore the needs and aspirations of young people seeking work as the cost to society of doing that would be enormous.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, the Government is quite concerned about unemployment among young people, which continues to be tragically high. That segment of our labour force has always experienced more difficulty in finding jobs than has been the case for older people. It is precisely to give young people better opportunities on the labour market that we have improved our training programs. Indeed, our last two budgets featured increased financial incentives to enable private enterprise to create jobs. For a number of young Canadians, it is often the first worthwhile job which will eventually provide them with the necessary work experience they could not have gained in any other way.

We are going through difficult times, even though the economic recovery is well under way, but unfortunately some employers are still reluctant to hire additional staff, with the result that young people are often forced to go back to school.

In the next few years we will have to create job opportunities for those young Canadians who having attended institutions of higher learning will be joining the labour market in increasing numbers. Again they will be in direct competition with older workers who already have practical experience. With a view to making it easier for our youths, the Canadian Government has created programs such as Career Access.

• (1520)

[English]

Compounding this problem is the fact that the majority of young adults entering the labour force lack marketable work

experience; thus their transition between school and work becomes even more difficult. Many young people leaving school find their skills are out of step with the needs of the labour market. In a tight economic climate these people are among the most vulnerable to changing economic conditions in which the last hired becomes the first fired. This in turn leads to unstable employment patterns which makes subsequent job search even more difficult. It is therefore imperative that, in order to facilitate their future entry into the labour market, young people still in school be provided with an opportunity to obtain the kind of experience that will make them more acceptable to employers.

The summer jobs created for students through the Canada Employment and Immigration Commission have been highly successful in providing young people with the kind of work experience they need to prepare for their eventual entry into the full-time work force. Summer Canada has also had a significant impact on summer youth employment each year. In fact, last summer's program created more than 73,000 jobs and no doubt contributed significantly to lowering the unemployment rate for students returning to school. In recognition of the serious employment situation students will continue to face this summer, funding for student summer employment initiatives in 1984 has been increased by \$70 million over its base level, bringing the total funding for this year's program to \$170 million. This money is being used to create career-oriented jobs for more than 69,000 students and to place hundreds of thousands more in employment in both the public and private sectors.

Summer Canada emphasizes the creation of qualitative, career-oriented jobs that will prepare students for future labour market participation. The bulk of the jobs will be created through the summer components of two of our year-round job-creation programs, Canada Works and Career Access. This summer Summer Canada Works will create experience-giving jobs for more than 41,000 students in projects sponsored by community and volunteer groups, professional associations, local governments and private sector employers. I understand that the quality of sponsorship proposals received for this year's program is better than ever. Those proposals are now being reviewed and my colleague, the Minister of State for Youth (Mrs. Hervieux-Payette), will soon be announcing which ones have been approved for funding.

Student internships in the private, public and non-profit sectors will be created this year through Summer Career Access. Funded at over \$30 million, this wage subsidy program will create jobs for more than 12,000 students.

The concept of summer internships was introduced three years ago in jobs with federal Government Departments and has been expanded to include non-profit organizations, and last year for the first time, the private sector. Assessment of