

Summer Employment for Students

this will result from the general employment conditions in the country and the policies of the government regarding employment, austerity programs and so on. These policies have increased unemployment substantially and have had an effect on students as well as others seeking work. On the basis of the present outlook we can expect quite a difficult summer in terms of students obtaining employment.

While the minister has said he has an advisory board and a program that is getting under way, I do not think anyone can stress too strongly the necessity for the minister and those with whom he is associated to understand fully the gravity of the situation and the implications for students who are not able to obtain work. Unfortunately we face a situation in which not only is employment becoming more difficult to obtain but also the number of students who need the extra money is increasing. Not only does the minister have to launch a considerably more vigorous program than we have seen to date but the government of Canada in association with the provinces must take a very careful look to determine the over-all position of these students and the extent to which students are being forced to drop out or defer their education for financial reasons.

I am disappointed that rather than working with the provinces with a view to meeting this problem the government has indicated in the white paper on tax reform that it is going to subject bursaries to income tax. This can only serve to increase the difficulties. We all recognize that if a student cannot continue his studies at a particular time in life he or she may well suffer irreparable injury with the result, of course, that the nation also suffers.

While I welcome the minister's statement and his assurance that he is working on this very serious problem, quite frankly I see no indication that the government is prepared to grapple with student assistance by placing it in context with the over-all unemployment problem. I urge the minister and the Prime Minister to really take this matter seriously, particularly in view of the fact that their policies are designed to create unemployment and incidentally create additional difficulty for our students.

Mr. Lorne Nystrom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, I too received the minister's statement a few minutes ago just as I entered the House. We in this party welcome the minister's statement of his intentions which I am

[Mr. Stanfield.]

sure are good. However, I believe we are in complete agreement that the statement does not go far enough. It barely scratches the surface.

The minister pointed out that 93 per cent of students seeking work found employment last summer, but he went on to say that about half of them were not satisfied with the employment they obtained. We must remember that many students who obtained employment last summer were remunerated at a rate which did not enable them to return to university. Several students from my province of Saskatchewan have written or spoken to me or to some of my colleagues pointing out that they just could not find employment last summer in the province of Saskatchewan which is suffering from some economic hardship. Something must be done immediately because this situation has handicapped many students and made it difficult for them to attend university. This is particularly so in the case of women who find that their salaries are lower and who do not wish to borrow huge sums of money in order to attend university.

We must remember that educated people are our main resource. Therefore I believe top priority should be given to this whole problem. The answer is not simply the finding of jobs. University education should be made available to everyone. If there is universal accessibility to education we will also have to provide more jobs for our working people.

I welcome the minister's statement but it by no means goes far enough toward solving the problem.

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, we are pleased with the results of the survey revealing that the great majority of students found employment last summer. We should certainly like to see every student succeed in getting a job next summer.

However, Mr. Speaker, perhaps it would be proper to point out that even if 82,700 students from Quebec, out of a total of 95,300, found employment, it remains that 12,600 did not. This is rather impressive. Would this mean that almost 13,000 Quebec students were unable to return to the university or to a technical school, because they had not the necessary financial means? If so, it is extremely unfortunate.