

Adjournment Debate

Motion carried.

[English]

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Sanding Order 38 deemed to have been moved.

EMPLOYMENT

Mrs. Beryl Gaffney (Nepean): Mr. Speaker, I am rising this evening with regard to a question that I put forward on June 10, 1991 to the Minister of State for Youth. Unfortunately the House adjourned prior to my being able to put the question. Briefly the question asked about the difficulties faced by Canadian students, and in particular the students in my riding of Nepean, with regard to obtaining summer employment. Unfortunately this is all happening this evening after the fact. As I said earlier, I was unable to put the question before the House in June.

Rather than addressing the many youth employment problems of today, such as the large high school drop-out rate, the closing of university employment centres and the generally dismal state of the economy which this government has created for our youth, I will focus my discussion on the specific problem which existed this past summer for those students who had planned to return this fall to university.

I certainly hope they have been able to do this. It is quite possible that many of those who had those high hopes in June have been unable to do so, because they can no longer afford the increase in tuition fees, the books with the GST, their rent and their groceries for the school year.

A large source of funding provided by the Government of Canada to students is found in the Summer Employment Experience Development program which, in shortened form, is called the SEED program. The SEED program in recent years has been cut back significantly. In 1989, \$118 million was allotted to the program. Last summer this figure was reduced to \$77 million.

The government seems to take great pride in making it known that this year the program received a boost in

funding. A more detailed examination reveals that this summer an extra \$3 million only was supplemented to the fund, bringing the sum of the pool to \$80 million.

The first observation to make in analysing these figures is that the funding for SEED this year still amounted to less than 70 per cent of the 1989 level of funding. Also, the \$3 million increase amounts to a 2.1 per cent increase above last year's allocation. This is less than one-half the rate of inflation and means the program has actually seen a decline in real dollars that are being put into it.

I would like to give some specific examples. The National Capital Region in 1989 received an allocation of \$1.4 million for the student SEED program. In both 1990 and 1991, that \$1.4 million became only \$424,000, a reduction of 70 per cent in the National Capital Region alone.

If I took the city of Nepean as an example, in 1989 the students received an allocation of \$123,000. In 1990 and 1991 they received only \$23,000.

We all know that \$23,000 does not go very far to supply students in a city the size of mine with a population of 108,000 and I cannot quote the number of students going to university, but \$23,000 would probably employ eight students over the summer.

If I could go further with my examples and comparisons, the two provinces I am most familiar with are the provinces of Ontario and Quebec. In Canada, the unemployment rate for students 15 to 24 years of age is 16.1 per cent. In Ontario, the average is higher than the Canadian average of 16.3 per cent. In the province of Quebec it is a couple of points higher, at 18.3 per cent.

Mr. Speaker, are you interrupting me?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Your time is over. You know the rules of the late show. You have only four minutes.

Mrs. Gaffney: Mr. Speaker, could I just make a last point?

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): Yes, quickly please.

Mrs. Gaffney: The point of the matter is that there are 9.5 million people in Ontario and 7 million in Quebec. The allocation for the province of Quebec was \$18 million. The allocation for the province of Ontario is \$10 million. I would like the government to seriously look at the disparities between the two provinces, between the