

*Supply**[Translation]*

**Mrs. Nicole Roy-Arcelin (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Communications):** Mr. Speaker, youth has been the main topic this morning. We are all aware that young people are experiencing some very serious problems in our society. I say society, because this is a responsibility that must be shouldered by society as a whole, by all three levels of government, the private sector and the unions, and because we have a society in which values have changed. Families are becoming increasingly divided. As a result, our young people are demotivated, but nevertheless, the government has launched some very attractive programs for these young people. We also understand why members opposite want us to focus on better programs for high school graduates.

• (1220)

Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the hon. member for Windsor—St. Clair whether he could explain why the NDP government in Ontario decided to drop the Ontario Scholars Program, since these scholarships for Grade 13 students who maintain an average of 80 per cent cost only \$2 million.

I would appreciate the hon. member's comments, considering the provincial governments' responsibility in this area.

*[English]*

**Mr. McCurdy:** Mr. Speaker, I do not like it. That is the simple answer. I would try to understand it and would hope that if the money were to be diverted to some educational program, it would benefit perhaps low income students who achieved a reasonable academic level, I would like it. But on the basis of what I know about it I do not like it.

My concern about education is not because I am a New Democrat and it is not because I am not a Progressive Conservative. It is because I feel strongly that education and knowledge is fundamental to our future economy, it is fundamental to opportunity and it is fundamental to a reasonable level of education.

I would ask the hon. member, who stood up in her preamble to her question to me citing these wonderful programs that the government has initiated to tell me one. Perhaps she means the work experience program

which the government adopted from a New Democratic document. That is one that I can think of.

I do not know of any initiatives in education that can be expressed as particularly—oh, perhaps she is talking about the scholarships for science students, except that they do not just go to science students, but that was a good initiative. I say so and I say so clearly. It is not enough. There should be no higher priority in this country than the education and training of our people and the elimination of illiteracy. Therein lies the basis for the economic survival of our country.

So I will be consistent about that. I see no partisan issue involved in that. I wish that we could depart from our party labels and look at this in the context of common sense. In fact, in terms of the debate that we are engaged in now, the only issue of common sense is the question of how we are going to put those kids who are not working this summer back to work and what the government should do within that context.

I say the government should put the money back into the Challenge program that it took out of the Challenge program.

*[Translation]*

**Mr. Allan Koury (Hochelaga—Maisonnette):** Mr. Speaker, I listened very carefully to what the hon. member for Windsor—St. Clair was saying, but what does it all boil down to? Is he saying all this just for the sake of making a long speech, to fight a battle that does not make sense, since he knows perfectly well this government provides GST tax credits to help all these families? Nearly 9 million people receive GST credits. This money can be used to pay for books and haircuts and for just about everything, and they receive quite a bit.

Would the hon. member, without necessarily giving a thirty-minute speech, comment on this?

**Mr. McCurdy:** Mr. Speaker, it is very hard to describe a single thing this government has done to help Canadians and especially needy Canadians. This government has divided our country, created a recession, and put the city of Windsor in a very critical position.

It is irresponsible of the hon. member to rise in the House and say that the government is acting to help the Canadian people. It is unacceptable because it is not true.