

Government Orders

Canada who are unemployed. It depends on the age group, because if we look at the 16 to 30 group, as we do in Quebec, we could say there are 600,000 young people who are unemployed.

So 2,500 does not have much impact. When we realize that of the \$10,000 spent on each young person in the Youth Service Corps, about \$4,000 goes to administration, there is only 6,000 left. It all depends. There are some variants in the pilot projects, and incidentally, in Quebec, pilot projects tend to be found in Liberal ridings, in most cases, although in Laval, there are two Bloc ridings and one Liberal—

An hon. member: It was a mistake.

Mr. Dubé: It was probably a mistake. So there is a coincidence, and I do not know whether in Western Canada our Reform colleagues may wish to help us out on this, there are not many, but they tend to be in ridings that are carefully chosen. The Secretary of State says the program will also be used to rehabilitate offenders, and I do not mind, but when they announced this plan, it was supposed to be about jobs.

I wish she would try and convince me, and I would also like to ask her about the \$150 per week, because I remember that initially it was \$61 per week for those living with their families, and it went up to \$121. She talked about partnership and consultation when she came to Quebec City. I heard she was coming the day she came, so it was too late for me to be invited. Another point is that to finance this Youth Service strategy, the government is taking funds intended for existing programs, including women's programs, which means that the government is more or less robbing Peter to pay Paul. Is this the kind of attitude the Liberal government wants to take? So I listened very patiently to the Secretary of State, but quite frankly, she has yet to convince us that she made a very positive presentation on the subject before the House today.

[English]

Ms. Blondin-Andrew: Madam Speaker, I am not sure that I would ever be capable of convincing the hon. member to believe anything the federal government does. I am sure he will recognize that since we have been in government there has been a boost in the economy. We have created 183,000 jobs since we were elected. Sixty-six thousand of those jobs have gone to Quebec. We have just had the signing of the infrastructure program recently.

Our youth initiative is an initial first step. We believe that this is one way to stimulate a very downtrodden and a very cynical group of young people who have been marginalized. We do not feel in the five and half months we have been in office we have had enough time to do all of the things we should do.

The hon. member spoke about consultation. This from the party that did not agree with us interfering jurisdictionally by bringing forward this program. We had nothing but headaches

and heartaches from its members. Now they want into the program. I am glad. Any time the hon. member wants to put forward a proposal I would be more than happy to receive it. I would be happy to meet with him outside the Chamber to discuss this program. I would also be happy to discuss all of the other programs we have.

• (1635)

The opposition members know we are having a very difficult time. We are streamlining, restructuring and in some cases collapsing boards and getting rid of programs that duplicate other services. This will allow us to reallocate for other positive purposes such as the youth service corps. We managed to maintain a level of service that is adequate for the public.

I do not really know what the hon. member is complaining about. However, I am certainly willing to work with him in the future on all of these initiatives.

[Translation]

Mr. Michel Bellehumeur (Berthier—Montcalm): Madam Speaker, I listened closely to what the Secretary of State for Training and Youth said. I think that she understands the problem well, particularly in a riding like mine where there really is a problem with young native offenders. I think her analysis of the situation was excellent.

I would like the hon. secretary of state to tell us however, with regard to social rehabilitation and reintegration—because I am sure she has ascertained with the Minister of Justice that it does—if indeed this aspect is covered in the bill. I am quite sure she did check because the minister alluded, albeit half-heartedly, to rehabilitation or reintegration. I would like to know where in the bill this aspect is emphasized. Is it emphasized by imposing stiffer sentences? By reversing the burden of the proof? How exactly does the bill provide for the reintegration of young offenders into society?

[English]

Ms. Blondin-Andrew: Madam Speaker, this whole issue of young offenders is not an either/or. We are attempting to create a balance within the justice system, especially as it pertains to young offenders.

We are looking at some rehabilitative measures. We are not going to lock up young people and throw away the key. We know that the costs for incarceration are prohibitive.

I know that because in my riding, and the hon. member for Kenora—Rainy River can attest to it, we had the highest rate of recidivism, of repeaters. We know what it costs to keep people incarcerated for long periods of time. The upkeep costs are prohibitive. The Minister of Justice and other members are attempting to create a balance to address the issues of violent