

Borrowing Authority

interest rates, and telling us that everything is going well. However, we forget to do some comparisons—

Mr. Fontaine: It is true, everything is going well.

Mr. Tardif (Richmond—Wolfe): —with what we had before 1984, when, as my friend said so well, we were faced with an historic recession which forced all industrialized countries, out of human decency, to accept an increase in their deficit.

Today, the situation is quite different and the economy is thriving. We are going through a period which would allow, in my opinion, more generosity in fundamental and much needed programs, for our youth in particular. I know that my colleague deals brilliantly with youth affairs. I would like to ask him the following question: Since 1984, did this Government take any concrete program initiative, any new measure to help students and new graduates, in particular within a very important resource envelope, the Laprade Fund? It was announced a few months ago, after many years of delay, that the Laprade Fund was being authorized. We were told that some \$80 million would be made available. Within this important resource envelope, are there different parts, does it allow for the participation of young people who would like to be associated with job creation?

Mr. Grondin: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank my colleague for asking a question on a matter or a problem as important as the Laprade Fund, concerning the possibility for young people to have a portion of that Fund eventually be put to use. Unfortunately, to this day, there has not been that many projects that were approved that will enable young people to use the opportunities the Laprade Fund should normally be providing. Unfortunately, this is more or less the result of the over all measures that were taken both by this Conservative Government and the Minister of State for Youth (Mr. Charest) who since 1984, as pointed out by my colleague, was wondering whether there were measures or programs that could be used by young graduates or even by school drop-outs who had difficulty finding a job.

Unfortunately, since 1984, and especially since I was elected here, on a number of occasions I asked the Minister of State for Youth (Mr. Charest), among other things, when there would be a real youth policy, a genuine policy dealing with opportunities and all the problems faced by young people in Canada. And we always had rather general answers, in which we were told: Well, there is no problem, the present economic situation is good, we are creating a lot of jobs, and the young people are being well served by the Conservative Government. I also have a clear recollection of the Prime Minister, Mr. Mulroney himself stating in this House on a few occasions that the Katimavik Program for instance would be replaced. When the Katimavik Program was abolished, its value was recognized and the Prime Minister stated that indeed there would be a replacement program. I have been here for 16 months, and after a number of questions on that matter, we still have

no program to replace the Katimavik Program, at least in that sense, and when certain programs were created, those programs were so limited to certain areas or major cities in Canada that there seemed to be a total lack of awareness that there are many young people in various areas in Canada that would need support in order to be in a position to set up an efficient structure or organization or initiative.

Personally, I am very much disappointed by that stand or lack of policies the Minister of State for Youth has yet to put forward, and that lack of programs to replace not only the Katimavik Program but also the other programs that were put forward for certain regions of Canada only, which explains that regional disparities as was mentioned on a number of occasions are still there, and some young Canadians are penalized in comparison to other Canadians who live in major centres.

Mr. Tardif (Richmond—Wolfe): The Hon. Member had a lot to say about the Challenge 88 Program. I know from my personal experience with Challenge 85, Challenge 86 and Challenge 87 that non-profit organizations have been shamefully neglected under this program. By putting the emphasis on the private sector, which might not be in itself a bad thing, the program is unfortunately being unfair to smaller communities where the private sector has no presence, which means that students in these small communities have no chance to work in their own community.

My question to my colleague is this: Does he know whether or not this aspect of the Challenge 88 Program will be improved to provide full access to non-profit organizations?

Mr. Grondin: Madam Speaker, my colleague is quite right to raise this issue, especially as the Minister of State for Youth said at a briefing on Challenge 88 that last year's criteria would apply which means that there will obviously be the same type of discrimination against non-profit organizations. However, as Hon. Members will recall, Challenge 87 allowed non-profit organizations under the jurisdiction of the social affairs department to take part at the last minute and benefit from the program. When people heard the Minister of State for Youth say at the briefing that the same criteria would apply as for Challenge 87, they thought that organizations in the social affairs network, such as drop-in centres, would be eligible under Challenge 88. We have learned that negotiations are under way, but there are only three days left to apply under Challenge 88 and we still do not know whether drop-in centres and social affairs organizations will be eligible.

In my opinion, this is blatant discrimination. It creates a very serious problem and I do not think that a remedy can be found as long as the Minister has not made a decision, even though he could have begun negotiations with the Quebec Minister of Social Affairs a long time ago. Since he has not done so, it is now impossible for such organizations to take part in the Challenge 88 Program.