

*Government Orders*

[English]

The Minister of State for Youth is in the Chamber as we speak, and I know that he knows my constituency. His own is all things proportional, not that far away, some distance, but nevertheless not as far as many Members of Parliament's constituencies. I have an article here from the *Hawkesbury Express* in my riding. It says:

Sixteen per cent record high. Jobless rate could get worse.

Here is what it says:

There are now 1,946 people receiving unemployment insurance benefits in the county. That translates into an unemployment rate of 16.6 per cent, says Fernand St. Jacques, manager of the local Canada Employment Centre.

Those are not statistics that I am inventing, Mr. Speaker. That is the hard economic reality of the riding that I have the honour and pleasure to represent in this House of Commons.

[Translation]

The situation there is very serious Mr. Speaker. I have been asking this government, for quite some time now, for an economic development plan for our area. I have to say, that we received a bit of good news recently. Apparently, under the auspices of the Community Futures Committee, we will have, in Hawkesbury, a program intended to improve the infrastructure, hoping to encourage Cité Collégiale to open a satellite institution in Hawkesbury. Now, I have something to tell the New Democrats, and I am sure they are all listening to me with interest from the other end of the room, Mr. Speaker. I can see how interested they are in this issue. I hope they will put a word in for us to their kissing cousins at Queen's Park, because they are the ones responsible for bringing Cité Collégiale to Hawkesbury.

I had the opportunity, recently, to discuss this matter with the Minister of State for Small Businesses who was telling me that the key is to improve education opportunities for our young people, and I agree with him. As he said so well, Mr. Speaker, we must make post-secondary institutions available to improve the schooling of our young people and enable them to find jobs. However, the ball is now in the court of the Ontario New Democrats, and they should know that all the people of Eastern Ontario are expecting them to act on this issue.

Some ministers on the other side have offered their help to convince the Ontario New Democrats. I wish to

thank right now those who will. There is no time to lose. We must act now and with all our might.

[English]

Aside from this community college initiative that I have just been describing, we are still losing more and more jobs.

A few weeks ago, in consultation with Employment and Immigration Canada, we managed to find funds to retrain people under the Job Re-entry Program. I was really proud that day. I was really happy. I drafted a press release, announcing all these new initiatives that were going to be established and the different high schools in the riding that would be participating in training these people who were unemployed—all of them women, by the way—to reintegrate them into the workforce. Was I ever pleased with this initiative. I phoned the local press to tell them about these grants we were getting that would give jobs, at least temporarily, to 125 women who would be retrained.

The reporter said he guessed I had not heard the news. Then he told me that that afternoon, Ivaco Steel laid off 140 workers.

After the effort was over, there was a net loss of 15 jobs instead of any gain. I was not exactly pleased. As a matter of fact, I was very discouraged.

[Translation]

A few days later, Canadian Pacific Forest Products announced it was closing its forest research lab in Hawkesbury.

[English]

CIP Research and Canadian Pacific Forest Products have had a research lab in Hawkesbury for 88 years. They have now announced that they are shutting it down. I regret that very much. Up until now, I have been trying to work in co-operation with the employees of that institution. It is not closed yet because there are still a few days left. Not very many, might I add.

I have been trying to convince Canadian Pacific Forest Products to delay the closing for a while, only a few months, because this is important.

Second, I want Canadian Pacific Forest Products to let the employees of that plant have the factory either at a reduced rate or no rent at all for a period of time in exchange for future considerations, preferred shares and so on, in the company that the employees are trying to