

*The Address—Mrs. Hervieux-Payette*

The themes of participation, development and peace will provide ample opportunity for integration with local, national and international activities. Indeed, as announced in the Throne Speech, the Government intends to tackle the problems of young Canadians during this session. The appointment of a Minister of State for Youth is therefore a mark of confidence in young people and of a deep interest in their problem, which are in fact the problems of all Canadian men and women, whatever their age. Young people must be given the chance to develop their talents and channel their energies in areas of their own choice. The Governments, the labour movement and the private sector can help them to make proper decisions and provide the assistance required to meet their objectives.

A while ago, Mr. Speaker, I spoke about the social and economic cost of youth unemployment. It is estimated that youth unemployment costs in the neighbourhood of \$3 billion a year to the federal, provincial and municipal governments in unemployment insurance and welfare benefits, as well as in assistance programs during periods of high unemployment. On the other hand, recent research shows an increase in the number of admissions to psychiatric hospitals during times of recession and a decrease during periods of economic recovery. The same is true for alcohol and drug problems. These findings apply to the population as a whole, but even more so to young people.

I shall deal later on with the federal programs already available in the areas of work training and job creation, but I must say offhand that we need more than programs. We also need a nation that is more mindful, more understanding of, and better disposed towards young people. Our governments and all those responsible for hiring, including both the private sector and the non-profit organizations, must become still more aware of the special needs and problems of young people and embark on a genuine crusade on their behalf throughout the country. I fully intend to be at the forefront of such efforts, Mr. Speaker. As I said on the very day of my appointment, I also intend to listen carefully to young people, not only at meetings like the upcoming summit of young Quebecers which I am told will be held in Montreal in late March, but in all circumstances and individually whenever possible.

Mr. Speaker, one can speak for young people only after listening to them to understand fully their problems and their latest causes, to appreciate their difficulties and realize all the implications so as to be in a better position to find remedies or appropriate solutions. I commit myself to the service of all Canadian youths and, although I do not have magic or miracle solutions, I can promise them full and active co-operation.

I should like to mention briefly that, thanks to existing federal programs, our young people already have in 1984 the opportunity to participate actively in certain projects. I have in mind particularly the federal program to create student employment this summer for which \$170 million has been

earmarked, as announced in the last Speech from the Throne. As in the past, young people will be given an opportunity to submit projects based on original ideas likely to create challenging jobs and undertakings which will be useful to the community. In many instances those young people will be working in fields which will enable them to gain a sound experience for their future careers. I will have more to say about this later on, but for now I would like to emphasize that, in our economic system, the private sector has an even larger role to play when it comes to student employment. I take this opportunity to urge major companies as well as small and medium-size businesses in Canada to consider right away the possibility of hiring male and female students next summer. It stands to reason, Mr. Speaker, that I will give special consideration to young women, as required by the difficult conditions in which they often find themselves.

*[English]*

It is extremely important, Mr. Speaker, to give young people the skills they need to practise professions the nature and importance of which are rapidly changing in an era in which technological advances are revolutionizing the world economy. For this reason the National Training Program was set up pursuant to an Act that we passed in the House two years ago. It is based also on agreements with the Provinces and on the co-operation of private enterprise, labour unions and teaching institutions. This year alone Ottawa will allocate more than \$1 billion to professional training.

A key element is to be able to predict which skills and professions will be in greatest demand in the next few years so that the education provided corresponds to the real needs of our economy. The goal, then, is to better plan Canada's human resources, especially its young resources. An important component of the program is the skills growth fund which is mainly used to upgrade the facilities to prepare people in highly specialized fields such as robotics, micro-computing and other areas of technological innovation.

In the 1984-85 fiscal year the Government of Canada will devote \$1.197 billion to its training programs, which will benefit over 275,000 Canadians, nearly half of them young people. The success of our programs, however, will depend not only on governments, educational institutions and young people, but also on private enterprise. As Mr. David Slater, Chairman of the Economic Council of Canada, pointed out in a speech delivered in Saskatoon on January 12, the private sector has an essential role to play in the training of human resources. Employers must take the first step in labour market development by clearly identifying areas in which workers with new or different types of skills are needed. Educational institutions must follow their lead by providing appropriate training. Encouraging employers to take this step will continue to be a priority of this Government in its ongoing consultations with business leaders.

I would like to return briefly to the Canadian Government's job creation programs in general, Mr. Speaker, and say a few words about those intended especially for young people. With