

*Oral Questions*

lowest rate since 1990. The hon. member will be particularly interested to know that in the last two months in the province of Quebec 16,000 new jobs have been created which is the highest job growth in any region of Canada.

[Translation]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, the minister is not answering my questions. I was asking about youth employment. Does the minister acknowledge that the youth employment situation has deteriorated since the Liberals came to office, with 27,000 fewer jobs for young people since November 1993. Is he prepared to acknowledge this?

• (1140)

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's figures are not correct. The unemployment rate has gone down for young people but not sufficiently so. Looking at the figures, one of the reasons is that still far too many young people are dropping out of school far too early and therefore do not have the required skills to get a job.

That is the reason the government introduced the youth internship program. It is a partnership with the private sector to create opportunities enabling young people to move from school to work with a full transition in a partnership way. This year over 24,000 young people will be enrolled in that program.

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**IMMIGRATION**

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the average Canadian cannot afford to travel in expensive limousines and yet the Department of Citizenship and Immigration gave over \$20,000 to a Toronto limousine service to ferry immigrants around town.

My question for the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration is why?

**Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration promotes open government and release of information to the greatest extent possible. I am certain the information the member has come up with probably came to him through this or other measures.

We are glad to promote open government and I am happy he has this information. I will pass it on to the minister to give the member a fuller answer at a later time.

**Mr. John Williams (St. Albert, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I thought my question was why we are ferrying immigrants around town in limousines, not about open government.

To continue in the same vein, the Department of Citizenship and Immigration spent \$200,000 at Big Bill's Furniture and Mattress Warehouse in Kitchener. It gave \$152,000 to Zellers to buy furniture for some immigrants. Again I ask the parliamentary secretary why?

**Ms. Mary Clancy (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I again compliment the hon. member on his question.

With regard to taxi services which he clearly wants to call limousines, a car is a car. On the other hand if he wants to look at settlement services and what we do for immigrants coming to Canada, it is a program of which we are very proud. It is a program we are determined to preserve because on this side of the House we believe in the importance of immigrants in that they help build this country.

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[Translation]

**CANADIAN NATIONAL RAILWAYS**

**Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux-Montagnes, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Transport. While the federal government has cut CN's debt by \$900 million in order to make it more attractive to investors, CN has signed a \$300 million contract with GM to purchase new Ontario-built locomotives.

How can the minister justify the decision to renew CN's locomotive fleet at the taxpayers' expense, when this ought to have been left for the new shareholders to pay for after privatization?

**Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member is no doubt aware that locomotives are not kept on a lot somewhere like cars are at a Ford or GM dealership. Let me assure the hon. member that the locomotives in question will be delivered to CN long after privatization.

**Mr. Paul Mercier (Blainville—Deux-Montagnes, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I take it that the minister prefers this huge order from Ontario to be made by a crown corporation. How can the minister allow CN to add \$300 million to its debt load by purchasing new locomotives at our expense when he has just injected close to one billion dollars of Canadians' tax money to reduce that same debt and to make CN more attractive to investors?

[English]

**Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it is obvious that the hon. member does not understand.

The restructuring of the debt for Canadian National has to do with the IPO that will be made available to the investment community in November of this year.