

Supply

students or apprentices rather than unionized workers. Like management, the unions believe that a general recovery of the economy will bring a solution to the employment problem of young people. For the time being, union priority is to protect active workers threatened by upheavals on the labour market. Union representatives believe that an industrial strategy centered on heavy industry and housing should result in the creation of a large number of jobs. In their opinion, the redistribution of wealth requires the promotion of early retirement, part-time work and work sharing or self-improvement leave without the participants being penalized by a decrease in their standard of living.

Union leaders also believe generally that we should improve on the work-study alternation programs and the wage subsidization programs which help the students to complete their training without accumulating debts.

The unions favour certain measures to promote the purchase of Canadian products and protect our markets against any excessive foreign competition. They recommend that co-operative endeavours be favoured rather than profit-sharing systems.

Mr. Speaker, it would take too long to list all the suggestions originating from all quarters, as well as the problems encountered by particular groups such as women, natives and handicapped people.

The sorry plight in which our young people now find themselves was not an overnight occurrence, therefore we should not expect these conditions to improve in just one year. However, it gives us, their elders, the opportunity to ask ourselves definite questions about the kind of society we want to live in as well as to question the set of values we believe in. Young people are asking themselves these same questions in a very mature fashion and wonder often if they should base their expectations and lifestyles on the way of life we are offering them.

Mr. Speaker, we should strive to change our approach and involve young people in our decision-making process. As Minister of State for Youth, I feel that one of my main duties is to contribute to a change of attitude toward youth unemployment.

The year 1985 having been designated as the International Youth Year will certainly provide us with the opportunity to challenge our young people into taking part in the debate on our collective evolution. Funds made available for the International Youth Year will be granted as much as possible to local, regional or national youth organizations which are eager to set up activities by and for young people. On the other hand I intend to help the most talented of our young people develop their leadership qualities, initiate projects and take actions that could benefit all our young people. International Youth Year should be a time when our young people between the age of 15 and 19, including our drop-outs, unemployed and academically disadvantaged, should get together, become aware of their

identity, learn to act collectively and find their place within society.

Mr. Speaker, I often feel that the struggle waged by a number of youth organizations in an effort to claim their rightful place in our society is similar in many respects to that carried on by the women in search of their identity and recognition of their rights. We should deal responsibly with the pressure these groups are exerting on our institutions; otherwise, our society as a whole will suffer.

● (1540)

[*English*]

The International Youth Year gives us an exceptional opportunity to involve young people fully in the examination of problems of immediate concern to them, while at the same time providing a forum for a broader exchange of ideas at the international level. It is in this context that I intend to discharge my responsibility toward the International Youth Year. As with the other activities in which I am involved as Minister responsible for youth, I shall proceed by making a special effort to meet and listen to young people. It will be my duty to ensure that the efforts of the Canadian Government on behalf of young people yield tangible results, primarily for them but also for society as a whole.

During the fiscal year just ended the Canadian Government wanted to set the tone for the great debate on the place of young people in Canadian society. We have not hesitated to change the Government's priorities in order to make the problem of youth unemployment one of the main concerns in Canada. Federal Government programs and services have therefore been adjusted and in some cases changed completely to enable young people to derive the greatest possible benefit from them.

The appointment of a Minister of State for Youth is above all, I think, a sign of confidence in young people and a recognition of their interests which are in keeping with national interests and those that are defended internationally by the United Nations. The International Youth Year will provide us with an unprecedented opportunity for promoting international co-operation and understanding in the interests of young people.

[*Translation*]

It will also be my responsibility to ensure that the emphasis be placed on the most needy among the young and I am committed, as Minister of State for Youth, to ensure that all our young people privileged, and underprivileged have a full share in our Canadian society.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): A 10-minute period is now provided for questions to the Minister or comments on her speech.

[*English*]

Mr. McGrath: Mr. Speaker, I understood most of the Minister's speech, but I want to ask her a question in her capacity as Minister of State for Youth responsible for one of