

But I feel that the most important reason that her achievement should never be forgotten is because of her drive to raise money to build a new aquatic wing in a sports facility being built for disabled youngsters.

Ms. Keith, along with her parents and crew, devoted many months to training, planning, and waiting for good weather—not to mention warm water—for safe crossings. Personal lives were set aside as this crew of dedicated individuals worked to make an opportunity possible for everyone who will use the new aquatic centre.

Canada has developed a fine tradition of young athletes who have donated their time, effort, and determination to benefit those who are less fortunate, and Vicky Keith now joins their ranks.

I congratulate Ms. Keith, her parents, and the crew on a fine achievement, and I urge all Canadians to show their appreciation by donating to Ms. Keith's cause.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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[Translation]

BURSARIES

CONGRATULATIONS EXTENDED TO 2,500 BENEFICIARIES

Mrs. Suzanne Duplessis (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of State (Science and Technology)): Mr. Speaker, I am sure that all Members of the House will want to join me and the rest of the country in congratulating the 2,500 winners under the 1988 Scholarship Program, whose names were announced by the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) on August 17. Fifty-three young Canadian students have been in Ottawa for the past two days, representing the 2,500 winning students in Canada.

The purpose of the Scholarship Program is to increase the pool of highly qualified personnel in science and engineering, and one of the Program's requirements is that at least 50 per cent of the scholarships go to women. Mr. Speaker, I am delighted to say that this year, 53 per cent of the scholarships went to women. To be eligible for the Program, students must be enrolled in their first year of study for a bachelor's degree in natural sciences, engineering or related disciplines. Every year, 2,500 scholarships each worth \$2,000 will be awarded. The scholarship may be renewed, depending on course results. The five-year program is worth \$80 million.

On behalf of all Canadians, I wish the students every success in their studies.

S. O. 21

• (1415)

EMPLOYMENT

IMPORTANCE OF PRERETIREMENT AND ADAPTATION PROGRAMS FOR WORKERS

Hon. Jean Lapierre (Shefford): Mr. Speaker, the somber sequence of plant shutdowns is continuing. A few weeks ago, I said that the Simonds Company in Granby was closing its doors, thus jeopardizing the jobs of 131 workers. There was also the closing of Avibec in Marieville, which affects 55 jobs, and recently, Lowney's in Sherbrooke closed down, affecting 350 jobs, which is the worst so far.

Mr. Speaker, I think these plant closings will make the Government realize there is an urgent need for reviving the early retirement program. In the case of Lowney, for instance, which is very similar to the situation at Simonds, the workers are fairly old, in their fifties and will have to either transfer to Smiths Falls or lose their jobs altogether.

Mr. Speaker, in August 1986, when the Minister of Employment and Immigration abolished the early retirement program, it was supposed to be replaced by another program within the next few months. It has now been two years. Meanwhile, families are living in poverty because people who have worked all their lives unfortunately cannot depend on the early retirement program. I therefore feel that these three plant closings should make the Government understand how urgently these early retirement programs and the adjustment programs are needed.

It isn't enough to say that people can manage their own affairs, Mr. Speaker. I think the Government has a duty to help those Canadians who have worked hard all their lives, and who now at the age of fifty or fifty-five are being laid off for reasons beyond their control. I cannot understand why, since August 1986, the Government has failed to wake up to this fact and meanwhile is letting people go out on the streets. Mr. Speaker, I earnestly urge the Government to wake up to reality and act sensibly and realize there are people across this country who are in dire straits.

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[English]

NARCOTICS

TORONTO—USE OF PARKS BY DRUG DEALERS

Mr. John Oostrom (Willowdale): Mr. Speaker, drug pushers are beginning to take over our neighbourhood parks as witnessed by the amount of discarded syringes which are being found daily.

Metro police report that dealers use parks to conduct the majority of their drug transactions. This situation is intolerable. Our parks and streets must be made safe for our children and these vermin put behind bars. Each one of us has to contribute if the war on drugs is to be won.