

● (1810)

The Minister of State for Science and Technology (Mr. Siddon) went to Quebec City twice in recent weeks to meet with representatives of various groups working with GATIQ.

In the course of their discussions, the Minister did say that he was in favour of the project sponsored by GATIQ concerning the establishment of hi-tech industry in the Quebec City area.

In that respect, the Minister held consultations with the leading promoters of this project concerning the future building site of the new National Research Council's optics institute, a project which the Hon. Member for Louis-Hébert (Mrs. Duplessis) has always supported wholeheartedly.

The institute will help Canadian industry through technological development and transfer, by training qualified staff and by developing expertise in potentially promising industrial fields. It will also provide the industry with optical design services and a test laboratory to assess the quality of optical components and systems.

This institute does faithfully reflect the government's commitment to help Canadian industry make the best of new technologies which offer challenging opportunities such as those in optics.

The great interest shown by GATIQ and the Hon. Member for Louis-Hébert in the construction of that institute is quite understandable, and their contribution in this case has been greatly appreciated.

The government feels that a decision in this case is extremely important, and we hope to be able to make an announcement in the near future.

If I may, Mr. Speaker, I should like to thank the Hon. Member for her outstanding efforts to promote this project. I also want to assure her that the Government of Canada will handle this project in such a way as to respond to the economic aspirations and well-being of the Sainte-Foy-Quebec City area.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker, I should like to say again that the Canadian government is aware of the significant technological new trend in the economic future of the Quebec City area, as proposed by GATIQ and unreservedly supported by the Hon. Member for Louis-Hébert.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): The Hon. Member for Mount Royal (Mrs. Finestone) has the floor, and I might suggest that the Hon. Member be as brief as possible because we are running a little bit late as a result of the consideration of the public bill.

Adjournment Debate

YOUTH—MINISTER'S AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY. B) PRESS STATEMENT ATTRIBUTED TO MINISTER

Mrs. Sheila Finestone (Mount Royal): Mr. Speaker, I hope I can put my question within the seven-minute period allotted to me.

[*English*]

The point I want to raise, Mr. Speaker, relates to the question I asked the Minister of State for Youth (Mrs. Champagne) in this House on November 8 concerning her responsibilities. Hon. Members will recall her answer, that she was doing some housecleaning in her Department, and that she did, in fact, confer with the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald) before the latter decided to reduce grants for youth on the job-training opportunities from \$1 billion to \$27 million, which our Liberal Government had budgeted. Ultimately, she admitted, yes, she should also help young people who are not well off but that they should also help themselves and do their share.

We cannot be satisfied with such answers, Mr. Speaker, given the present high level of youth unemployment and the level of youth unemployment forecast for this winter and the following summer which, by the way, will be marked by the beginning of the International Year for Youth. Statistics, studies and testimony of young people demonstrate to every Canadian, except, it seems, to this Government, that the number one problem facing our youth is unemployment. The young people most affected by the economic recession are those who have left secondary school with no marketable skills. The plight of these young people, as well as of our graduates, without future job prospects, must be addressed directly if the problems facing them are to be overcome.

How can young Canadians who represent 25 per cent of our population expect to have their vital interests properly defended by this Government? For me, Mr. Speaker, the mandate of the Minister of State for Youth is only one of advocacy as she herself stated in her reply to the Speech from the Throne. In addition, she sits only on social development cabinet committee and consequently cannot be heard on the crucial economic and regional development committee, or on the priorities and planning committees where key decisions are made.

● (1815)

Canada's youth deserve direct access to decision making. Perhaps the Minister should review her mandate with the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney).

I believe that within the context of this economic recession, when competition between different age groups is exacerbated, the Minister should be doing more than simply managing the distribution of approximately \$8 million in grants for the International Year of Youth, and doing advocacy. Our youth need more than rhetoric on how important they are to this country, and a few sporadic projects. They need a co-ordinated approach to their serious social and economic problems. They need to believe there is a future for them in the job market and that they can play a useful role in Canadian society. Otherwise their despair will grow and their sense of self-worth will