

*The Address—Mr. Bouchard**[Translation]*

Basically, Mr. Speaker, this country reflects our differences and the course we Canadians are steering. We must keep in mind that Canada is a whole made up of various parts. Nothing in the employment strategy is engraved on stone. If current trends continue, we will have to acknowledge that Alberta and British Columbia are now experiencing hardships in terms of employment and to come directly to grips with their problems. Our provincial counterparts can count on our full support. Each community must strive to seek solutions to its own problems. Mr. Speaker, I want to emphasize the point: each community, each region must make an effort to find its own solution to employment problems, and the Department of Employment and Immigration will be there to lend a hand.

[English]

As we in the House go forward with the business of the nation we must recognize that our first duty is to face reality. We must face the world as it is and, equally important, the way the world will be tomorrow. Only by looking ahead can we prepare the ground for the future.

[Translation]

Still, Mr. Speaker, we can also dream about tomorrow, and I would even suggest we must do just that. This is the seed of hope in our future as a nation and we all know that the labour market will have changed substantially in ten years from now, at about the turn of the century. Are we really quite prepared to face this reality? Of course a number of Canadians will continue to think that tomorrow is yesterday and that the labour market owes us everything without anyone having to do his or her share. Some people will continue to believe in a static economy, powerless to compete and where governments always seem to come up with the right answers. Yet others will not accept the responsibility of taking an aggressive stance in the game of vested rights and compromises because, apparently, it is not up their alley.

• (1130)

[English]

I remain personally convinced that the majority of Canadians understand and support the need to develop new approaches to the world of work, where each has a responsibility to assume, where the collective efforts of Canadians are required in order to confront international competition, where we must sustain measured progress and maintain the momentum of a dynamic labour force.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, if our different backgrounds is such a vast country do create misunderstandings now and then, I am firmly convinced that, being all Canadians, the world of tomorrow will reflect our affinities.

Mr. Speaker: Questions and comments. The Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps).

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask the Minister how he can justify the fact that, under the Challenge '86 program, funds have been allocated to a few businesses such as La Ronde, in Montreal, while certain non-profit organizations have been harshly cut off and have been prevented from sending even a few children to the summer camp for handicapped children. Can he justify this conservative policy?

Mr. Bouchard: Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps) will certainly understand that it would be extremely hard for me to give a reply to such a question this morning. She has quoted facts out of context and without any references and said that funds have been allocated to La Ronde but not to certain non-profit organizations. This is essentially a general assessment. The Hon. Member says that money has been given to some people, but not to others. As for me, Mr. Speaker, I believe that Challenge '86, as Challenge '85 before it, has been a great success. Whatever the Hon. Member may feel, and I am convinced that she is herself happy about it, we have been able to give young Canadians an opportunity to work during the summer, when they are generally available. I believe that Challenge '86 has been a good experience, especially as the young people involved were mostly associated with businesses which have to appreciate the abilities of young people in this country. Whether we are speaking about La Ronde or about non-profit organizations, many people have received help from this program. Generally speaking, I believe that people appreciate the Challenge '86 program.

[English]

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the Minister's speech and found it to be most informative. We always appreciate his attempts to keep Members informed of statistics on a weekly and monthly basis with regard to how the Department is performing in lowering unemployment. I would like to ask for one small point of clarification. Having looked at the unemployment figures for the last few months it seems to me that the unemployment figures for the last reported period were up slightly over the previous period. I think it was 9.3 or 9.5 per cent. In his Throne Speech address the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) said that unemployment is at its lowest level in five years. Is it correct that in a sense he was not quite accurate?

Mr. Bouchard: Mr. Speaker, I think that was a global evaluation. The trend for the unemployment rate is not regular. It may be down for July and up for August. I think that generally the trend was positive. The rate of unemployment in the country is generally the lowest for the last five years. My understanding is that the reference in the Prime Minister's (Mr. Mulroney) speech was in this sense.

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, congratulations on your new position.