

### *Employment*

broadcast that this money is being spent, that jobs are being created, and that we do not just discuss projects, but carry them out. Additional funds amounting to \$42.8 million will be allocated to promote tourism in Quebec, despite the fact that the Quebec Minister of Tourism has refused to attend the federal-provincial conferences on tourism. This same Minister of Tourism then comes to Ottawa and tells the federal government that it is not doing enough for Quebec's economic development. Mr. Speaker, the hon. member for Joliette may want to associate himself with these people, but the Quebecers, the Quebec members of the Liberal caucus in Ottawa are certainly not interested in being associated with them.

There is still more, Mr. Speaker. We shall be spending \$15 million a year toward the capital costs of trade and convention centres in seven major cities in Canada, including, of course, the one in Montreal, even though, once again, the provincial minister does not want to attend federal-provincial conferences where these matters are discussed. They say that they will only attend conferences dealing with the economy. Yet, Mr. Speaker, for the people of the Gaspé peninsula, for the people of the Quebec City metropolitan area, for the people of Lac Saint-Jean, for the people of the entire province of Quebec, tourism is a major industry and the Quebec government is responsible for promoting it in co-operation with the federal government, and not by way of confrontation.

This is a very incomplete picture, but all this action has been taken because of the pressures and the vigilant co-operation of the Quebec Liberal caucus in Ottawa, a group of Members of Parliament who have decided no longer to give way to the requirements of the rhetoric of the Quebec government, but to take action in their own areas of jurisdiction. I do not think that we have any lesson to learn from the hon. member for Joliette. Where was he when this action was being taken? He was with Biron, Parizeau and Lévesque. He was dealing in rhetoric and propaganda while we were creating jobs, Mr. Speaker.

Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, we are allotted a mere 20 minutes. It is regrettable that I had to speak right after the hon. member for Joliette, because perhaps it might have been interesting to see his kind of reaction to the explanations that he was given concerning job creation and investments by the federal government in the province of Quebec.

• (1720)

[*English*]

**Mr. F. Oberle (Prince George-Peace River):** Mr. Speaker, I could not begin to compete with the kind of rhetoric we have just heard, so I will stick to my own text.

I am grateful for the opportunity to speak in this debate because I wish to share with hon. members my concern about the most important industry in our country—in terms of employment, at least—the forest industry. In doing so I wish to remind the government of the consequences of a deliberate policy of neglect, consequences which are particularly serious at this time.

I will also try to make some positive suggestions, as is my style. I am glad the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Mr. Axworthy) is here. I know the minister responsible for forestry was here a minute ago. I hope those ministers will have their ears pricked so they can learn what is new.

First let me put up a backdrop for the ugly scene of neglect for which this government is at least partially responsible. Officially there are some 1,030,000 people unemployed in Canada today. Unofficially some say that number is closer to 1.5 million. Incredibly, half of those people are under the age of 24. The youth component of our unemployment rate is the biggest. Young people in our country today are starting their lives with feelings of uncertainty and even fear. Their hopes are dashed. Their aspirations are disappointed. Instead of confidence and enthusiasm they have doubt and mistrust in the system from which they have just graduated and of which they are the product.

It is said that our economy is in a serious state of crisis, but the worst crisis is the crisis of unemployment and the crisis of confidence which unemployment has created. It is a crisis of loss of esteem and loss of confidence. We have lost the confidence of our young people. There is a lack of confidence in our ability to function as a nation. People lack confidence in their government. They have been deceived and betrayed. People tell me they feel they have been lied to and, as several of my colleagues have already said, I have the feeling people have had that done to them once too often. As I said earlier, we have even lost confidence in ourselves. That is a very serious matter because we cannot begin to rebuild a nation if people do not have confidence in themselves and in their own ability to produce and share in the task of producing.

As hon. members know, I recently published the results of a study I carried out in my office dealing with the problem of youth unemployment. I discovered that despite all the efforts the government claims to have made over the last 15 years, the situation of young people in the labour force and statistics relating to unemployed young people have worsened. For instance, in 1966 young people between the ages of 15 and 24 made up 24.2 per cent of the total labour force, but they made up 40.6 per cent of the unemployed. In 1980, 26.8 per cent of the labour force were people between the ages of 15 and 24—a small increase—but that group made up 47.1 per cent of the unemployed. No wonder people are frustrated with our educational system and are demanding change. Even if we were to come to terms with the backlog of training required to get our young people into the work force and, to help them make the transition from school to work, our economy could not, at least in present circumstances, absorb our young people.

• (1730)

As hon. members know, I represent an area in Canada which has a disproportionate number of young people in it. It is a young man's country. It is pioneering country. It is also a producing area of our country. Most Canadians look at north-eastern British Columbia as an area that holds out greater promise than the rest of Canada, particularly in view of the