

## EDUCATION

**Mr. Stan Keyes (Hamilton West):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in the House today in honour of the students in my riding of Hamilton West and across Canada who will graduate from elementary, secondary and post-secondary institutions this month.

This year over 260,000 students will graduate from high school, over 83,000 will graduate from college and approximately 170,000 will graduate from university.

It is my hope that as these students progress through our system of education and training they will continue to achieve new levels of accomplishment in the lifelong learning process.

I have said in the House before that education will be the salvation of our society. In the present information age this statement is proving to be more and more important as we approach the 21st century.

I am sure that all members of the House will join me in congratulating the class of 1994.

## ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

[Translation]

### JOB CREATION

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, in a speech he gave yesterday in Paris at the annual meeting of the OECD, the Minister of Human Resources Development said that Canada's present job-creation program does not fit the socio-economic reality and must be revised. I quote from the Canadian press, where the minister is reported to have said: "We must build a new program that will put Canadians back to work, while ensuring income security for those who need it."

My question is for the Deputy Prime Minister. Does she admit that this statement by her fellow minister is a stinging denunciation of the government's job-creation strategy, which only creates temporary jobs in the infrastructure program? Are we to conclude that this government will finally do something specific to create jobs?

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, I do not accept the opposition leader's statement. Obviously, we are reforming social security because the present system is not working.

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, with all due respect, I believe that I must apologize to

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the Deputy Prime Minister, who told us yesterday that ministers' trips to Europe were worthwhile.

In fact, this trip has brought out the truth, an admission of failure, since in this moment of sincerity, the minister admitted abroad that the government's job-creation program, the one in the red book, is not working and will be replaced.

I would ask the minister to continue to own up and tell us whether her government intends to review its budget strategy, which involves reducing the deficit on the backs of the poor by taking food from their mouths, as the finance minister himself said, the very man who imposed an unprecedented cut in unemployment insurance benefits.

• (1420)

[English]

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, that is exactly what the minister did not say. If the Leader of the Opposition is interested in the truth, perhaps I can read exactly what the minister said, and I quote:

The message is that it is time for a change and we must move toward a very strong approach to relieving structural unemployment. It is very much a part of our unemployment strategy.

Obviously the reason for the social security reform is because there are too many unemployed people who have not found jobs for weeks, months and years. We have a structural problem and that is what we are going to try and solve.

[Translation]

**Hon. Lucien Bouchard (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Prime Minister should not send the Deputy Prime Minister to Europe; it seems that things are clearer in Europe when Canadian affairs are discussed.

I would ask the Deputy Prime Minister if she admits that the substantial cut in unemployment insurance benefits penalizes even more heavily local communities in several regions of Quebec and Atlantic Canada, where a large proportion of seasonal workers face conditions that restrict their eligibility for unemployment insurance.

**Hon. Sheila Copps (Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Environment):** Mr. Speaker, trips to Europe were mentioned. It seems to me that the hon. member, when he was in Europe a long time ago, was a federalist.

While things are happening in Europe, it is also obvious that the reason the Minister of Human Resources Development is now adopting a new social policy is that workers in Matapédia, Matane, Lac-Saint-Jean and Roberval have not found work for years. That is why the system must be changed.