

**Mr. MacInnis:** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. Surely, Mr. Speaker, when a member rises in the House on a question of privilege, the Chair owes it to that member to rule whether or not the question of privilege is valid. I suggest that Your Honour ought to rule on whether or not the minister's question of privilege was proper.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Laniel):** Order, please. I remind the hon. member that it is not always easy for the Chair to pass judgment on points of privilege. The Chair tries, as far as possible, to apply the rules of the House. I think some hon. members on the opposite side of the House felt that the minister had not raised a question of privilege. I do not know. The Chair at that moment felt that those remarks had been judged according to the mood of the House.

**Mr. MacDonald (Egmont):** On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, I do not know what the appropriate parliamentary procedure is with respect to winks. It has been difficult to wink at what the minister has been doing. However, for the sake of letting us get on with the business of the House, I will gladly wink on this occasion and hope that one wink is sufficient.

**Mr. Jack Murta (Lisgar):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate this opportunity to participate in this debate. I listened to the Minister without Portfolio (Mr. Stanbury) and did not hear him say anything new. In other words, I do not think he refuted any of the charges made by the official opposition this afternoon.

**An hon. Member:** What are the charges?

**Mr. Murta:** If I am to fall into one of the categories the minister mentioned at the beginning of his speech, it is only because my remarks, I believe, will be to the point. They have a direct bearing on the subject we are discussing this afternoon. The Opportunities for Youth program has been the subject of widespread speculation and discussion throughout the country, and I think it is only appropriate that we devote at least one day of debate to it here in the House of Commons.

I would like to say at the outset that this program is the greatest political sham I have ever seen. It seems to me to be typical of an ill-advised, ill-informed, callous Liberal government. A member of the government might ask why we are pressing debate on this topic today, and I can only say that it is our deep concern over the project and the unemployment situation as a whole which brought us to do so. Youth unemployment is a very important issue, an issue which must be discussed on a year-round basis and not just before crisis situations such as those which arose last April. This is not a once-a-year dilemma to be forgotten in the hope that it will not happen again. The government has told us that the crisis situation has been overcome this year and that we should devote our debate to something else. I say to the government that the crisis is not over, that youth unemployment is not a temporary problem, that the Opportunities for Youth program has not lived up to expectations and that the government must be blamed not only for its lack

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of foresight but also for its lack of planning and imagination.

We do not intend to let the government forget its responsibilities, Mr. Speaker. We do not intend to keep silent until next April, when the government will surely find itself facing another summer of high unemployment. And we do not intend to let the government forget the Opportunities for Youth fiasco into which it has forced the youth of this country.

I, for one, am amazed at the government's general attitude in facing this problem. When will they realize that they cannot go on meeting issues like this on a day-to-day basis? Meeting them requires long-range planning and an examination of past mistakes. If and when a program is organized for next year, I hope the government will remember its experience this year with the Opportunities for Youth program. The taxpayer can ill afford to fund projects such as this which cannot be judged to be a success. Instead, it can be judged to be a failure. I am sure that the taxpayer would gladly foot the bill for programs which attempt to solve youth unemployment problems. The taxpayer cannot be expected to tolerate projects such as Opportunities for Youth if they are not taken seriously, even by the government which has introduced them. Mr. Speaker, the government could not have taken the problem of youth unemployment seriously. On the other hand, if it took the problem seriously, it should have acted much sooner. I can only say, Mr. Speaker, that I hope the government will take the problem of youth and student unemployment more seriously in the future.

• (5:00 p.m.)

I feel that it is my duty to point out the mistakes in the program because the government refuses to recognize them. The greatest shortcoming in the Opportunities for Youth Program is poor administration. Civil servants cannot be totally blamed because they lacked the proper facilities and personnel. The problem is the result of late notice and the failure of the government to realize the response there would be from the unemployed students. They had no idea of the number of students facing unemployment or they would have been prepared for a larger number of applications than they apparently expected. The consequences of the late announcement of the program have already been pointed out by previous speakers. The short notice before the deadline for the formulation of projects resulted in hasty organization. It was very difficult for the students to put together a viable program which would meet the unknown criteria which were so necessary for acceptance.

I want to emphasize the lack of regard the government has had for what may be called a critical situation in the rural parts of Canada. I am not familiar with the situation outside of the Prairies, but from the information I have been able to gather in Manitoba, there was a general lack of regard for the areas outside of the urban centres. In my own constituency, the information was not made available until four days before the deadline. Even with this disadvantage, at least eight projects were submitted from Lisgar but as of yet none have been