

Mr. Charest: I have no control over what newspapers print, Mr. Speaker, but the person who conducted the interview will confirm that. The statement was this, which will certainly be of interest to my colleague the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie: "Young people need not be dictated by anybody the major issues in which they should be interested." And I draw this from my own personal experience. When I entered politics, some people were adamant: "You should deal with environment or peace issues, because these are matters young people are concerned about." Well, it is not true. I want to say to my colleague the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie that young people are interested in all major issues, and my message to them is that the choice is their own. Neither you nor anybody else should tell them what issues they should be interested in. If it is peace or disarmament, well, it is their choice. If it is employment, it is their choice too. Because it is their choice, I want them to know that they can get involved in any debate, because they have the basic right to do so.

As far as your second question is concerned, comparing Canada with other members of the OECD places us in a world context, because Canada competes in a world context. But the Throne Speech, if you took the time to read it, clearly indicates that the unemployment rate among young Canadians is unacceptable. The fact remains that if you want to be objective and try to forget for an instant or even a split second your partisan bias, you will recognize that the unemployment rate among young Canadians is down, that we must stress training and retraining, something which your own Government failed to do, for all sorts of reasons which I do not know, and I do not want to pass judgement, but it is something which our Government has elected to do.

Show us, then, how the Federal Liberal Party in Quebec is addressing the real issues of the future. How? What do you offer our youth, beside rising every day in the House and saying no to all new proposals and innovations suggested by this Government?

● (1630)

[English]

Mr. Epp (Thunder Bay—Nipigon): Mr. Speaker, I would like to explore one particular area which the Minister of State for Youth (Mr. Charest) has touched upon. It is an area in which I trust he can have some effect on the policy of the Government over the next months.

The Government has difficulty meeting the needs of Canadians as a result of constrained finances that are made available in various areas. Surely that is true with regard to the Canadian Jobs Strategy. I think it also true with respect to the summer employment programs for students and young people. With that in mind, I would like to ask the Minister to involve himself with the development of the Challenge '87 program. I ask him to do so forthwith to ensure that the requirements for the program are known at an early point, that application forms will be made available and that funding will be adequate to needs. If he does this, we will not have to face

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the type of situations that I experienced last spring. At that time there was not enough money in my riding. The money that was there had to be spread very thinly over the various communities. The Land of Nipigon Chamber of Commerce comes to mind immediately in terms of information services which it hoped would be provided through Challenge '86. It was not possible to provide for that.

At Lakehead University there were faculty members concerned about providing some very challenging opportunities for youth. The lateness of the application deadlines and the length of time required to process them made it difficult for Challenge '86 to be the type of program that it should have been.

I ask the Minister to respond briefly to my concerns. I encourage him even more to ensure that the funding is adequate and that the needs of young people will be more fully met by this program.

Mr. Charest: Mr. Speaker, in response to the Hon. Member's question, I would like to thank him for acknowledging the fact that the program does work well. If we refer specifically to what could be bureaucratic difficulties, which are normal, I point to the fact that that is just part of implementing new programs. If we want to try new measures and programs in this country by bringing in new solutions, we all have to accept the fact that the first time around it is always difficult. We will work things out. The Hon. Member brings this to my attention today, and I am glad that he does. We will be looking at the report which will eventually come in on the subject.

With respect to the funding for Challenge '87, whether it will happen or not, as I have said from the beginning, this Minister will not take anything for granted. We will look at Challenge '86. We will look at what happened within the program itself, see how it has fared. Then we will take the appropriate decisions once that time comes. I hope to be able to give good news to the House in that vein.

[Translation]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The period provided for questions and comments has now expired. The Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart).

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, I wish to speak to the Address in reply to the Speech from the Throne. First of all, I would like to congratulate you on your appointment as Acting Speaker, but I am probably the only one in this House who will condemn what happened the other night, the hypocrisy of it all, that the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) would have us believe he revolutionized Parliament and that the Speakers were democratically elected. If that were true, my colleague Marcel Prud'homme would be one of the Speakers of this House, and we would not have had a demoted former Minister appointed as Assistant Deputy Speaker, Mr. Speaker.