

The Address—Mrs. Champagne

possibility of taking new initiatives to help young people help themselves.

Finally, I shall continue to hold bilateral meetings with my counterparts in the provinces and the territories, who are responsible for youth-related matters. I shall attempt to define with them the objectives which we can share and to ensure the relevance and complementary nature of our programs.

Finally, I will endeavour to ascertain whether there is any unnecessary duplication of our respective endeavours. I will therefore be in a position during 1985, the International Youth Year, to put forward specific proposals. They will serve as the basis for long-term planning for the young and will truly help enhance their involvement in all sectors of our society.

The International Youth Year is indeed a unique opportunity for youth to strengthen their self-image and potential, to pave the way for future generations. For us adults, it is a privileged period for improving our awareness of the youth fact, to communicate with them and to foster their integration into society.

I specifically and cordially urge all our young people and all those who are interested in them to take an active part in the celebration of the International Youth Year.

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I would like to point out that if I seem to dwell upon the young people who are doing all right, I also care for the minority of young people—a minority that is always too large, whatever their numbers—who are facing tremendous difficulties. I have in mind the young unemployed, the young faced with poverty, whether they are workers or students, the young whose emotional ties with their families have been severed, those who are withdrawn within themselves and have lost all hope of better days ahead. They deserve special and first hand attention, because without minimum standards a person cannot grow and fully contribute to society. Were we then to stress the lot of these young people only, this might have negative effects, discouraging the young, making them over-conscious of the obstacles confronting them, leading them to ignore the enormous potential of youth generally, with or without problems. This might emphasize short-term solutions rather than solutions that extend in the future, or create a ghetto for the young people whose problems frighten the adult population and deepen the generation gap. This is why, in my view, an approach to youth must also set aside an important place for their creative achievements and contribution. A youth policy must address all of the young, and increase the potential of each and every one.

To summarize, I see my role at various, closely related levels. First, I definitely intend to strive during the International Youth Year to look for solutions that can improve living conditions for all our young people. In that sense, it is my belief that most young people who succeed will help the less privileged within their rank. Second, as Minister of State for Youth, I am committed to direct all of my energy to influen-

cing federal policy orientations pertaining to social, political, cultural and economic activities affecting Canadian youth.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Questions, comments.

• (1620)

[English]

Questions or comments. I would like to recognize the following Hon. Members, the Hon. Member for Cape Breton-East Richmond (Mr. Dingwall); the Hon. Member for Regina East (Mr. de Jong); the Hon. Member for Nickel Belt (Mr. Rodriguez); the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie); and the Hon. Member for Winnipeg-Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy), in that order.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, I would like first to congratulate the Minister on her remarks. I would like to say how happy I was to hear those remarks because they were made with some degree of conviction. However, during the election campaign, the Leader of the Minister's Party promised "jobs, jobs, jobs", and I believe the Canadian youth responded to that and voted en masse for the Conservative Party. However, the Minister ought to know that it was revealed by StatsCanada that there are 600,000 young people unemployed. There are another 300,000 young people who are "officially unemployed" but who have not reported this to StatsCanada. Therefore, we are looking at crisis proportions, Mr. Speaker, with 900,000 young people unemployed.

My question to the Minister is: Notwithstanding her conviction to see something realized for young people in this country, does she not believe, as I do, that there is a credibility gap? On the one hand, the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) promises jobs—on page 9 of the Throne Speech there is mention of jobs—and on the other hand, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) cuts out most of the programs for Employment and Immigration. When will the young people of this country see some concrete, substantive action as opposed to more studies, dialogue and deliberation with the private sector?

I suggest to the Hon. Minister that young people want jobs; they do not want rhetoric!

[Translation]

Mrs. Champagne: May I say that I am somewhat disappointed, Mr. Speaker; I felt that since he appeared to listen to my remarks and to understand my deep convictions in this regard, my hon. friend would have been satisfied. I indicated very clearly in my speech that I would serve as the spokesperson for youth in the Cabinet and indeed I am the spokesperson for youth-related issues in the government.

Mr. Speaker, let me tell the Hon. Member that the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald) answered his question just a few minutes ago and that employment programs are her responsibility.

[English]

Mr. Rodriguez: Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the Minister on her speech. Indeed, if I were handing out