

Patterson) that he would be prepared to respond to my question and share with us the solutions he has in mind so that we can deal with these problems which we are very concerned about as well.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Lapierre:** Mr. Speaker, I would like during this debate on the borrowing authority—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** I made a mistake, I do not know whether the hon. member is rising on a point of order or wants to take part in the debate.

**Mr. Lapierre:** I want to take part in the debate, Mr. Speaker.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Blaker):** Then, the hon. member for Fraser Valley East (Mr. Patterson) is entitled to reply to the point of order.

[*English*]

**Mr. Patterson:** Mr. Speaker, my colleague, the hon. member for Etobicoke Centre (Mr. Wilson) certainly did outline some very important proposals. In addition I spoke about the change in attitude and philosophy which is necessary in order that the private sector have an opportunity to function and fulfil its role. It is not the government's business to get into business, it is rather to create a climate in which the private sector can develop and fulfil its role. If we can do that, then we will find that the sector which provides over 60 per cent of the jobs in this country, the small and medium-size business community, will have the opportunity to fulfil its role. That is one of the major ways in which we can get our economy rolling. If we could create an expectation of hope and anticipation, in other words create a feeling of confidence as far as the investment community is concerned, then we will find we are getting somewhere as far as solving our economic problems is concerned.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Jean Lapierre (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State):** Mr. Speaker, this evening, as part of the debate on borrowing authority, I would like to deal with a subject which is of great interest to all Canadians. It is, in fact, a subject that is seldom discussed in this House by our friends opposite. I can remember only once that they discussed this topic, and that was the day before the vote on their party's leadership. The subject was youth. I find it a fascinating subject, and I am sure some of our distinguished members opposite will remember the show they put on at the time for their delegations of young Conservatives. During question period, one of the younger members would rise, ask questions about subjects of interest to young people, sit down, and so forth, and this went on like a game of musical chairs throughout question period. This was last year, and we have not heard any debate on the subject since. Originally, all this helped to more or less consolidate the

position of their leader, but since that time, they have forgotten these young people to whom the Leader of the Opposition owes his leadership.

I think people are beginning to realize that from time to time, a change occurs in society's values with respect to education, work and recreation. Consequently, the government must also adjust its policies and update its activities and programs. In the course of this debate, I should like to review some of the major problems facing young Canadians today.

● (2040)

First of all, I think the subject people are most interested in is employment, because it is truly a key area and a priority for all young Canadians who are expected to leave school and enter the labour market at such a difficult time. Students, parents, educators and governments are all giving very serious thought to the manner in which young people are being prepared for life and the work place. During the last twenty years, the average level of education has increased considerably in Canada. In 1961 for instance, about 75 per cent of young people had completed secondary school, compared to more than 90 per cent in 1981. However, easier access to education does not mean that we have solved all the problems facing young people.

In a recent report, the OECD noted that there was a time when the vast majority of young people left school at about the same age, and that at that time, those who came from disadvantaged groups in society were not socially and economically handicapped to the extent that they are today, when there is so much emphasis on certificates and diplomas. The OECD noted that the less educated still belonged to the disadvantaged groups in society, and it concluded that in some cases, the education system may even be aggravating the handicap these people start out with.

The OECD study covers a number of countries besides Canada, but we must still bear in mind its conclusion. Society in general and governments in particular must be careful that young people are not solely assessed in terms of the number of diplomas they have been awarded or the number of years of education they have received. They must also be evaluated on their contribution to society. In fact, young Canadians are giving society their idealism, their enthusiasm and their spirit of initiative—virtues that are sadly lacking opposite—a blend of characteristics that gave us a Terry Fox, for instance. Do we need a better example? I feel that we were able to produce a hero of this calibre because of the idealism, enthusiasm and spirit of initiative that young people seem to have in greater supply than any other group. Therefore, since youth has enthusiasm and idealism to spare, what can we do and what are we doing to put these characteristics to work and to develop them? Obviously, everything starts with education. More specifically, we must see to it that everyone has access to higher education, and that students are able to transfer from