

Company of Young Canadians Act

● (4:20 p.m.)

This tremor quickly produced a parliamentary committee to consider the problem further and make certain recommendations. Following the committee report, we had imposed upon the CYC a one man trusteeship under which all facets of the CYC were frozen on the spot, projects were cancelled and much work ground to a halt. Today, we are considering this enlightened document, Bill C-176, which I believe is disloyal to almost everything the Committee report and the CYC originally stood for. Now, some four years and \$7 million later we have completed the circle and are back to the appointed council. I oppose this idea in the strongest possible terms.

I realize fully, Mr. Speaker, that my motion and the previous one will be regarded by some of the flaming revolutionaries as mere tokenism. They may well say that unless they can have a majority on the council, they do not want to play. These amendments also may be regarded as mere tinkering with an organization so totally defanged as to be meaningless in terms of the job to be done. Be that as it may, I genuinely believe that the voice of the "doers" should be heard strongly on the council, not just that of the "planners."

An amendment calling for three of seven or eight and four of nine to be elected by volunteers would achieve this kind of voice and give those close to the projects a pipeline to those council members further removed. That kind of liaison would be beneficial to everyone concerned. It would not be a majority voice so the criticism of project backscratching could not prevail. It would not be a case of "you back my project and I will back yours". This whole problem and the criticism levelled previously could be avoided.

Another criticism raised to volunteers electing council members is that it puts the executive director in an impossible position. As part of management he has, so to speak, to work with people who may be concurrently his superiors and his subordinates. I do not believe this is a strong argument, because if the council operates effectively and within the rule that the council is supposed to address itself to, that is one of policy and legislation, it would not interfere with the executive or administrative function. I think as long as the executive and legislative roles are completely isolated from one another, this management criticism could well be avoided. I believe the council could set its policy and the administrative director could administer the same. I

[Mr. Rose.]

do not believe the council should be concerning itself with administration; neither do I believe that the executive director should be concerning himself with policy.

I urge the House and the minister to accept this amendment. I think it is in keeping with the minister's own views of participation and will indicate to those volunteers who do remain that this firsthand "in the field" experience will be readily transferred to the body charged with framing the policy under which the volunteers must function and work.

Before I close, I think I should protest the fact that neither during the committee hearings of last fall, nor those of last month at which this bill was considered, did we hear from the volunteers. They did not appear before us in spite of repeated requests from them. I tried, to no avail, to have them before us again this month and I think if they had expressed, some of their concerns and fears for the new order of things, their views might have been exposed and discussed.

I also wanted to learn a great deal more personally about the activities of Mr. Mendelsohn, the comptroller, and the executive director during the time they remained firmly in the saddle. Since their tenure is to end on March 31, I wanted to know how many projects were cancelled; how were volunteers replaced, if they were replaced; what criteria were used in shaping those decisions. These were things that concerned the volunteers in the field, but we were denied the information in committee so hon. members are again being called upon to render a decision on a complex and emotional subject without the complete story. I think also it would have been useful to hear how the people served in the various areas felt about the CYC. I think that was an oversight; we did not have a chance to explore that side of it. Most of our time was taken up by a continuous parade of high level administrators and seldom did the committee get down to "where it's at".

Over the last two months we have had little chance to look at Mr. Mendelsohn's reign and to look at the function of local projects from the top down, which is a reversal from the previous method of operation. Doubtless the comptroller was merely fulfilling his mandate, which was to freeze everything in sight. I would not suggest that there was no reason for this. Members of our party have said before that we felt there should be financial responsibility and accountability. Certainly, there have been severe restrictions placed on some of the remaining projects.