

Social Development Ministry

families, what programs and incentives will he offer to foster the family unit? Parents teach their children to be independent; a country should do the same.

● (2150)

What programs are there going to be for exceptional children? What encouragement is going to be offered for children at both ends of the exceptional spectrum; the brilliant child who has a natural talent for music or anything else but whose parents cannot afford to have his or her talent flourish because it costs \$3,000 a year or so? What tax incentives will be offered to those parents who are frustrated because they cannot afford the same calibre of cultural education as those in higher income brackets? Why is cultural understanding a prerogative of the rich? Is this minister going to help the parents whose child needs special instruction because of a physical or emotional problem? Just what are the minister's areas of responsibility?

Is this the ministry that will finally develop a firm federal affirmative action policy? We all know there are disadvantaged groups that require assistance within specific areas of federal responsibility; representatives of women, native people and the handicapped. Affirmative action programs exist in certain areas but, heaven knows, progress has been slow and these programs lack co-ordination. The federal government is long overdue in accepting its responsibility in this area. Few of the recommendations made by the task force on the handicapped have been implemented.

Will the minister set up standards to surmount the obstacles faced by the handicapped in employment, transportation, housing, and recreation? Our party is willing to listen, and to try to improve policy on the employment of the disabled. In all fairness, some progress has been made in this area through programs such as LEAP and Outreach, but short-term jobs for the disabled are not enough. A myth still exists that must be corrected regarding the hiring of a handicapped person. What direction will the minister have to foster awareness in this area through the employment ministry? Before this new ministry is created this House should know its terms and goals, lending credibility to the intent of government to help the mainstream Canadian.

We are all aware of the constantly changing challenges facing individuals, private groups and governments, and one of the most challenging will be job creation in the 1980s. As I have said, what initiatives will the government bring forth to ensure permanent jobs for the ever-increasing labour force? By the end of the 1980s almost half our population will be in the labour market. Our young people have had access to higher education and yet unemployment is their dismal future. The problem must be dealt with now.

I am not suggesting it should be handled totally by the federal government, but action must be taken to stimulate the private sector to create jobs for the young people. Governments must create the climate for the private sector in this area, and encourage entrepreneurs and investment, employers, unions and government, to work together to meet the demand

for skilled labour and properly to implement programs that will meet the needs of our young people. We must foster a willingness to work, and not fall into the same trap set by Bryce Mackasey in 1971 when he assured us that the UIC program would not discourage people from working.

There is a need in this country for a sense of involvement in the community. An awareness of social structures must be fostered. Established voluntary organizations must be adequately funded.

Will this be the umbrella ministry to correct all the social injustices that do exist, and that have been perpetuated by Liberal administration too intent on its own salvation to worry about the direction of the country? What surveillance programs are going to be introduced either through Health and Welfare, environment, or through this new umbrella ministry to monitor areas that affect Canadians every day; problems such as acid rain, methylmercury contamination; yes, the old bugaboo, metrication? The list is endless. There are very few areas if any of an individual's life that are not affected by government.

If I might, I should like to come back to the youth of this country for just a moment. Will the minister in his capacity as justice minister be introducing amendments to the existing young offenders act, marijuana laws, prostitution laws and, if so, has he reconciled these changes with their impact on the family structure? As I have said, this ministry will obviously be responsible for families. What are the priorities intended to foster family unity and, consequently, national unity? Is the minister prepared to look at our social problems in the context of our legal framework? Is the minister prepared to look at our divorce laws and the issue of capital punishment?

Human rights are another area where the minister will have to state his intention. I believe the justice department is currently looking at all federal legislation for possible conflict with the human rights act. Will this proposed department be involved with immigration policy which, in effect, is discriminatory to certain groups? How does he plan to handle the racial tension that, whether we like it or not, does exist in large cities such as Toronto and Vancouver? One of the ministers, I noted this weekend, while speaking in Toronto said that racial tension is caused by youth unemployment; that they are too idle, they have nothing to do, and therefore they have time on their hands and they get into trouble. I could not agree with him more. What is the government going to do to encourage employment for the young?

The authority of the Human Rights Commission is being challenged by federal departments, and this challenge can in no way be said to be productive of progressive, free social thinking.

The publication, "A National Understanding", in 1977 stated that Canadians have a right to education in the official language of choice, and facilities should be provided where numbers warrant it. Bilingualism programs are available to almost anyone, and in most cases with no direct cost to the individual, but right here in the House of Commons the Liberals are fostering a practice of discrimination. Neither