

*Company of Young Canadians Act*

members of this party who were on the committee, end the agony by putting the company out of its misery. Then let us get on with the business of the positive involvement of youth in the affairs of this country.

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Chairman, I rise to say a few words on this bill and also to propose some amendments which I hope the ministers concerned will consider with favour. Let me say first that whatever the reason may have been for setting up the Company of Young Canadians, it was and still is a good idea. It is a good idea to have this organization, but in my opinion only on one condition.

What was the idea behind setting up the company? Was it to create a vehicle by which young people in Canada could genuinely participate as those who have grievances against society, in the decision-making regarding matters which concern our daily lives? Was the idea to create another Boy Scout club or organization that would be a kind of conforming service club in which young people might participate? In our view, if the intention is—as some members of the official opposition have indicated—to have a Company of Young Canadians which will be no more than a kind of well-meaning, do-gooding service club, we do not need public funds to create that sort of conforming organization. We could have this in many other ways. Many of us have contributed and continue to contribute to private organizations seeking to assist the needy people of this country. If the idea was to provide that kind of help to needy people, this is not the way Parliament should do it.

We should help the needy people by pursuing the kind of economic and social policies which will lift them out of their need in whatever direction it may be—full employment, lowering the cost of living, increasing pensions, and so forth. We do not need an organization to give people charity. That need not be sponsored by the public treasury. We have the responsibility and power in Parliament to decide what is needed today for the needy people of Canada as far as lifting them out of their misery is concerned.

I understood the Company of Young Canadians was to be an organization which, to put it very simply, would promote dissent in Canada on a responsible basis. I understood that was needed in this country then and is needed now. This idea deserves public assistance by some kind of organization, particularly of young people, to help those who have been forced to live in slums, those who are

[Mr. Dinsdale.]

rooked as tenants by landlords, and to help native peoples and others who are suffering from discrimination and a particular kind of injustice. This organization could help to organize these people to get up on their hind-legs and scream like mad against the establishment which placed them in that position.

If the Company of Young Canadians will not do that kind of job, as far as I am concerned there is no need to expend a single dollar of public funds on it. If they do the job right, we will have the establishment worried, the establishment meaning not only those in government at the federal, provincial or municipal levels but all those in Parliament and in the legislatures. They will be criticized and will have their shins kicked, and that is good for democracy. There is nothing worse for a democratic system than having everybody conforming with what is the established norm in society. There is nothing easier than for those in power—I am not pointing my finger at this government—to get into a rut and think what they are doing is the only thing that can be done.

From my study of history, it is true of every government in the world, no matter what its colour, that the easiest thing for it to do is get into a rut and see only the good it does and not see under the surface or really sense what the people feel they need day by day. As far as I am concerned, that was the purpose of creating the Company of Young Canadians. The company was to have as one of its main objectives the job of making sure that the government was made aware of the grievances certain people suffered. Its purpose was to make the government aware of their anger, their frustrations, their resentments, their criticisms and their hollering against the authorities who placed them in that position. I suggest this is worth while.

It seems to me that only the most complacent members of a democratic community could be annoyed with people who raise their voices against the conditions in which they find themselves, or annoyed with the people who make it their job to help the disadvantaged in society get together, organize and voice their protests. That is the only purpose of the Company of Young Canadians.

I do not object to some assistance being given to a youth parliament or any other exercise in which young people might take part in order to better understand their citizenship. I hope they understand it better than some adults. Let me interpose here that while I am not a victim of the youth cult, I think it