

### *Government Orders*

giving them the necessary resources and support so that they can take better care of their young people too.

One of the most important aspects of the reform of social programs proposed by the Minister of Human Resources is consultation. Taking so much time and resources reminds me of the operation which followed the failure of the Meech Lake Accord and led up to the famous Charlottetown accord. The more things change, the more they are the same. One could say that this government does not know how to learn from past failures. If only we were assured that the consultations will proceed in the spirit of openness described in the speech from the throne. But judging by previous consultations, that will surely not be the case. If the consultations preceding the speech from the throne are any indication, how does the government intend to ensure the openness described in the Speech from the Throne?

I would like to mention here something that happened to me on January 15. Having learned the day before that the Secretary of State for Training and Youth was holding consultations in Quebec City, I contacted her office to be invited as an observer in my capacity as opposition critic for training and youth. No way, I was told, it was by invitation only, and they did not even tell me where it was taking place, even though Quebec City is across from Lévis, right near my riding.

Since this consultation was for all young people in Quebec, I later contacted the main youth organizations to find out if they had been invited. None of these groups, except the permanent council on youth, a Quebec government agency, had received an invitation. Invitations were made over the heads of the umbrella groups, sometimes directly to some member organizations or to organizations which have nothing to do with training. As if that were not enough, student organizations were completely overlooked, and students will soon be on the labour market. Is that how this government intends to consult? That is a fine way to consult!

Another gem about the Secretary of State for Training and Youth is her statement last Monday on Quebec. She said: "I have been to Quebec twice and I have a fairly good idea of what the people there want". I have been to English Canada several times myself, and in all modesty, I cannot say that I know very well what the people in those provinces want. If you think you know what Quebec wants after two visits to Quebec, I think you are fooling yourself.

● (2005)

Even if there are at least a hundred federal programs available to young people, very few are reserved specifically for them and when they are, they are inadequately funded.

The worst thing that happened to young people during the Conservative reign was not the elimination of the Katimavik program, the demise of which went virtually unnoticed aside from the remonstrations of Senator Jacques Hébert. No, the worst thing was the elimination in 1987 of a provision which gave priority to young people in so far as federal programs were concerned. Another dramatic situation that young people face is when they are caught in the middle, that is when they meet neither the criteria of the federal government, nor those of the provincial government. These young people do not have access to occupational training if they do not receive unemployment insurance or social assistance or if they have not been out on their own for at least two years.

Even though the federal government does not seem inclined to respect provincial jurisdiction over training, it could at least respect existing structures before creating new ones, especially given the context of budget cuts. Consider the example of employment development agencies and agencies that sponsor training extension programs. There is a comprehensive federal network in place in Quebec and elsewhere and I think these structures should be strengthened before new ones are created.

In point of fact, the demands of young people have been well known for many years in Quebec. A national youth summit was held in 1983 and more than 133 agencies participated in public hearings in 1989. One very important fact emerged from these consultations, namely that jobs were a priority. According to young people and to groups that made representations, the ultimate goal that the government should be pursuing is full employment.

In pursuing this objective, consideration must be given to the characteristics of the various groups of unemployed people and to the realities in the different regions. People in the community must be involved to a greater degree. Without regional solidarity, there can be no worthwhile job creation plan. Young people are also critical of the multiplicity of programs and of the way in which resources are allocated. Specifically, they lament the fact that each time a new government comes to power, the names of the programs change.

Quebec youth want a quick end to duplication and to futile struggles between governments. They also want to be involved more in the process. Young people have set up youth consultation forums in the regions but they need more money to support their action. They are also hoping for improved funding of local youth community organizations.

To help young people the government intends to create a Youth Service Corps, an initiative that should give them the opportunity to undergo a training period to acquire experience and build up confidence. This project is strangely reminiscent of the old Katimavik program abolished by the Conservatives in 1986. The Youth Service Corps does not stress second language learning as much as Katimavik but it does not offer any new