

*Opportunities for Youth Program***MISCELLANEOUS PRIVATE BILLS**REFERRAL OF PETITION AND REPORT TO STANDING
COMMITTEE

Mr. Victor Forget (Saint-Michel): Mr. Speaker, I move, supported by Mr. L'Heureux:

That the petition of United Bank of Canada, tabled after the period of time specified in Standing Order 90, be referred to the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Private Bills and Standing Orders, together with the fifth report of the clerk of petitions submitted to the House on Thursday, June 17, 1971, so that the Committee may make the recommendations that it deems appropriate.

Mr. Speaker: Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The motion is adopted.

[English]

Mr. Speaker: Hon. members have heard the motion proposed by the hon. member for Saint-Michel. Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the said motion?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

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[Translation]

YOUTHOPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH PROGRAM—STATEMENT
BY MINISTER

Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, so that the House may understand the Opportunities for Youth program more fully, I would like to take a few moments to outline detailed information about the program and to place it within the context of the over-all summer employment and activities programs of the federal government for this year.

As you know, the total budget for the summer 71 program is about \$67.8 million, which represents the provision of more than 70,000 jobs. This compares with last year's spending of \$33.2 million, which resulted in the creation of jobs for 38,300 young people. In certain respects, however, this is a misleading comparison because this year's programs emphasize to a much greater extent activities which do not provide direct employment. I am thinking here of the tens of thousands who are engaged this summer in language training programs, athletic endeavours or travelling. An important objective of the summer employment programs is to offset regional disparities by providing more assistance to those regions that are hardest hit by student unemployment. The number of students in each region and the levels of other provincial and federal spending in each region that would create summer jobs have been taken into consideration. Opportunities for Youth moneys has been carefully allocated to assist the government in achieving this balance. For instance, the following is a breakdown of

[Mr. Pelletier.]

the Opportunities for Youth allocations by region: Atlantic Region, \$2.8 million; Quebec, \$9 million; Ontario, \$5 million; Prairies and N.W.T., \$3.8 million; B.C. and Yukon, \$2.4 million; National, \$5 million.

Embarking on such an endeavour, we must be prepared to face certain problems. Not all of us have the same needs, nor do we often agree on the measures which should be taken to satisfy them. Nevertheless, I am confident that we can overcome the difficulties which will develop, although there already have been problems and there will likely be more before the summer is over. Some of the problems are administrative: it has not been possible to finalize project approvals as quickly as we had hoped; nor has it been possible to release the project funds as quickly as had been planned. But all in all there were some 13,000 project applications to process and we are at the present time dealing with 2,500 approved projects involving some 30,000 people.

[English]

I know that many students who responded to the Opportunities for Youth challenge have been disappointed and some of those who have had their projects approved have felt frustrated over some of the delays. But I also know that the vast majority have shown real understanding and appreciation of what is involved in implementing this program.

At the same time, the government recognizes and has recognized from the beginning its responsibility to Parliament and to the people for the spending of public funds on a program of this nature. This responsibility weighs more heavily in respect of a program that is admittedly experimental. To those who have voiced concern towards this aspect of the program, I would like to set out the four means by which the government will discharge its responsibilities for the spending of these moneys.

First, every Opportunities for Youth project will be visited by an official of my department. He will ensure that the project is carrying out the activities and fulfilling the objectives that were agreed to. No further payments will be made to projects that are carrying on activities other than those agreed in the government's contracts with the project organizers.

Second, all projects receiving funds in excess of \$25,000 will receive an audit by the Department of Supply and Services. The department will also run spot audits of all other projects. In addition, all projects are required to submit financial statements before the final payment is made.

Third, an evaluation of the program will be carried out on which the young people themselves, community officials and voluntary organizations will contribute their views. In addition, a range of outside experts in community development, youth activities and social research will be asked to assist on this evaluation.

Fourth, the government undertakes to publish a report on this evaluation at the conclusion of the program. This report will be tabled in the House and made available to