

Opportunities for Youth Program

ing students not seeking employment, as well as those who would have been unsuccessful in finding paid jobs, would be looking for useful, productive ways in which to spend their holiday period. Therefore, the problem facing the government was to provide jobs as well as worthwhile activities for a large segment of the student population during the summer of 1971. In doing so, the necessity was recognized for overcoming regional disparities in opportunities for students and for ensuring emphasis on jobs for post secondary students, including those who would be entering universities and colleges.

Among the specific programs formulated by the government to give employment to students during the summer are the federal public service hiring program, militia, cadet and civilian training courses sponsored by the Department of National Defence, the international student summer employment exchange under the Department of Manpower and Immigration, grants and research studies under the sponsorship of the Department of National Health and Welfare, including educational grants for student athletes, a study of athletic facilities across Canada, and a series of research positions in the area of the current problem of the non-medical use of drugs. Projects in the areas of travel and exchange include projects for group travel within the domestic, international and federal-provincial young voyageurs programs of the Department of the Secretary of State, as well as a program of exchange carried out in conjunction with Association France-Canada.

The department also is responding to the increased interest of young people in individual travel in all parts of the country not by providing a network of youth hostels but by responding to local initiative and offering financial assistance to local organizations across the country. In addition, a program of roadside travel information kiosks has been offered where there is local interest in such information centres.

Mr. MacDonald (Egmont): Tell us about that program.

Mr. Stanbury: The Department of the Secretary of State is also sponsoring \$1.5 million worth of grants for 2,500 post secondary students to take second language training to improve their knowledge of either English or French. This program has been co-ordinated through the secretariat of the Council of Ministers of Education of Canada, implemented by provincial departments of education.

In addition, the 390 Canada manpower centres, including 50 university centres and 110 special student centres, are informing students regarding jobs activities in both the private and public sectors. Special student employment centres are largely manned by students themselves. In addition, the Department of Manpower and Immigration is again sponsoring the "hire a student" advertising campaign aimed at involving the participation of the private sector in student summer employment.

The range of programs which I have touched upon constitutes an expenditure of some \$42.8 million, and these have meant or will mean the creation of more than 70,000 jobs for students, which does not include activity

[Mr. Stanbury.]

programs on which grants are given to individuals, for instance, for language training.

The Opportunities for Youth program, which is the specific concern of the House at this time, involves the expenditure of some \$25 million. Taking all programs together, the government summer '71 program amounts to a total expenditure of about \$67.8 million, an amount—and I should like to stress this in view of the accusation contained in the resolution that the government has not responded to the needs of youth—more than double the level of government spending on such programs in the summer of 1970.

The objectives in the development of the new Opportunities for Youth program were twofold. First, it was the government's wish to make it possible for citizen groups, voluntary organizations, and especially young people themselves, to develop opportunities for the employment and participation of young Canadians during the summer of 1971. Second, it was our desire to find an imaginative and rational procedure for dealing with all proposals from outside the public service and the private commercial sector that would encourage the development of opportunities for employment and participation of young people.

In the statement to the House announcing the summer student employment and activities program on March 16 last, the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) emphasized the government's desire, in accepting its obligation as a major employer, to provide as many temporary jobs as possible but to avoid make-work activities which contribute little to the national wellbeing either now or in the future. As well, the Prime Minister noted at that time:

However desirable the goal of summer employment for students may be, it must not be pursued in a fashion that reduces the opportunities of employment for those persons who are in or are entering the permanent Canadian labour force. Ideally, one of the results of properly designed programs of summer employment and student activity should be the avoidance of competition for permanent jobs with adults. The programs which the government proposes, and in which it needs and is seeking the co-operation of other levels of government and the private sector, have been drawn up with this in mind.

The resolution today accuses the government of not responding to the needs and desires of youth. The most cursory examination of the basic tenets of the Opportunities for Youth program would reveal that the program is designed on the premise that young people should have the opportunity to become aware of projects that need to be done, to define creatively their own roles in these projects and to participate in as wide a variety of activities and new services to the community as possible.

I have emphasized, among other things, the wish of the government to ensure that the opportunities for employment created under the summer '71 program in general and opportunities for youth in particular take account, as carefully as possible, of the regional differences in student employment needs throughout the summer. The interdepartmental committee responsible for administering the Opportunities for Youth fund established a series of regional allocations for the fund based on three factors: first, the percentage of students in a given region—