

*Company of Young Canadians Act*

that one of the young Canadians who was active in the early, formative years of the company, Mr. Duncan Edmonds, a man who was involved in governmental activities in Ottawa at that time, made an emergency trip to Ottawa and at a press conference advocated in the strongest possible terms that the CYC, one of his brain children, be put out of its misery in order that the idea of the involvement of youth in public affairs might survive.

In addition, the committee was supposed to travel. Newspapers published headline stories to the effect that the committee would divide itself into small groups in order to visit some of the CYC projects in the field. Notwithstanding these headlines and the advance publicity given before the committee hearings got under way, there was no opportunity to visit these projects.

Now in order to try to bring a very nasty situation under control, we are now short-circuiting the normal processes of Parliament so as to bring some fiscal control and responsibility to the administration of public funds. This is why the members of my party support this measure. Above all else, the chronic maladministration of public funds must be brought under control. The matters that brought the committee together in the first instance remain unsolved. Indeed, confusion in the committee was compounded for the reasons I have briefly outlined.

The simple truth of the situation is that the company was taken over by an element of young people in Canada who can hardly be regarded as truly representative. This has been demonstrated by the stories that have come from Toronto over the week end, when the council that was brought into being only a few weeks ago found it necessary to dissolve, and this at a meeting that was, to say the least, bizarre, reflecting the Alice in Wonderland atmosphere that has pervaded all the deliberations on the subject of the Company of Young Canadians.

Reference has been made to Mr. Jim Lotz who appeared before the committee—an anthropologist, a community development worker and a sociologist. I suppose that all of these descriptions would apply to the work he is doing in Canada in many areas of social reform. He doubted very much that a group of this kind could work under the auspices of the government. In particular, if I may quote him directly in this regard, he said that “people who want to solve problems by revolution don’t know their history”.

These are the fundamental issues with which the government must come to grips if the charade that has lasted for about four years is to end. Members of the official opposition on the committee voted for the immediate dissolution of the CYC in order that something more constructive and positive could be created from the ashes. As long as agony and indecision on the part of the government continues in regard to this disastrous experimentation—which is what it has been called—in government involvement in this sort of volunteerism, the idealism of Canadian youth which has been expressed in so many positive ways and excellent voluntary social acts and programs, will be besmirched.

We support the idea of a financial controller to bring a sense of responsibility to the expenditure of public funds. We suggest that some of the more “way out” projects that have been revealed in recent days be cancelled forthwith; indeed, some already have. The hydroponics experiment in the city of Toronto should at once be denied access to public funds. As I read the account of this interesting experiment in social action in the city of Toronto, it seems to me that hypodermography would be a much more apt description of an activity that has been supported with public funds.

● (4:20 p.m.)

A number of worthy social programs in this country are withering on the vine because they lack public support. I have already mentioned the youth parliament. If the government is looking for ways in which to spend money on positive programs for social action, I strongly recommend that it come to the assistance of the hard-pressed friendship centres which deal with basic social problems in our urban centres, including those faced by the Indian and Métis population. These centres and voluntary agencies have depended almost entirely upon private support for the continuation of their work. If the government wants to support voluntary participation of a positive kind, this is one approach it might take.

There is within the Privy Council a Committee on Youth which is reviewing all these matters. I trust that committee will come to a decisive conclusion to end the disaster of this experimental activity of social involvement by Canadian youth and that we will as quickly as possible, as was recommended by the