

the provinces for disbursal; the provinces are better equipped to face local situations, and the communications problems which have plagued this project would be eliminated. In closing, I ask the government to be realistic in its appraisal of this program and to make changes for the future are required. At stake is the future of thousands of unemployed youths and millions of the taxpayers' dollars. Surely, in these circumstances the government will soon wake up to the realization that the steps it has taken to assist the youth of this country have been far from adequate; they could be more rightly termed ridiculous. The experience of this year should be considered as an important lesson. I can only hope the government will learn from its mistakes.

Mr. James Hugh Faulkner (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker—

Mr. McCutcheon: Here comes a pack of nothing.

Mr. Faulkner: I think the description which has just been gratuitously offered before I have uttered even a word could be more accurately applied to what we have had to endure from members on the other side this afternoon.

I should like to sum up my general objection to and criticism of this motion today by saying that every single rumour which has been spread about Opportunities for Youth, every suggestion of mismanagement, has been leaped on, unchecked and unverified by the opposition, and reiterated in this House as fact. The hon. member for Lisgar (Mr. Murta) who has just spoken used strong terms and I have the impression that what he had to say was founded upon certain fears, fears which are totally unsubstantiated, but fears which are nevertheless present in his mind. Had he said, without an expression of fear, that he would like to see a regional breakdown in connection with the funds so far allocated, that would have been a proper position to take. But opposition speakers have been implying from the beginning that there are grounds for fear. The charges by Alderman Crombie, unsubstantiated and unverified, were made the subject of a motion for adjournment. This is the sort of thing that worries me, coming from those who had, I assumed, supported the program in principle until today.

The hon. member for Lisgar says he hopes the government will take seriously his recommendations for the improvement of the plan. Of course, we will. Of course, we shall make the changes which experience recommends. That is not a novel suggestion. It has already been made by the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) and others.

I wish to review the motion before us. It does not deal with specific projects. It is a blanket condemnation. It deplores the misuse and mismanagement of the Opportunities for Youth program. Three months ago there was no program. There were no personnel, there were no funds. It was a totally new concept which the Secretary of State and this government brought before the Parliament of Canada and the Canadian people. It was

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imaginative in design, bold in its belief that something could be organized by young people to meet their needs. It was a unique effort on behalf of the government to respond to the willingness of thousands of young people to do things in their community, for their country, which they felt was worthwhile. We felt that something of a positive nature could be achieved in communities across Canada with the financial help of the federal government. In the beginning the opposition was entirely with us. Members opposite supported the concept. They realized we were contemplating an exciting departure and they supported the idea as bold and creative venture in a new type of relationship between young people and the federal government. Three months later some 2,400 projects have been approved in principle. Some 30,000 people will be active across the country. Yet at this point what we are considering is a motion of censure, a motion of no confidence when I would have thought we should have received a motion of praise, a motion of support.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Faulkner: I am prepared to acknowledge that there will be difficulties. This comes as no surprise, of course. But we should not lose sight of the fact that it is not the individual project which is important; it is the general principle which is embodied in the program.

Mr. Paproski: It does not matter how much money you spend.

Mr. Faulkner: Who did the work in setting up this scheme? It was not the career civil servants, people trained for years in the public service. It was carried out in large measure by a group of young people who were recruited to work on the program and assess the various projects submitted. Of the total team which was at work in Ottawa, numbering at its peak something like 100, only five or six were career civil servants. The rest were young people who, I had assumed until now, had the support of this House in their efforts to get the program launched. They have worked colossal hours under what we all confess to have been extraordinarily difficult circumstances and within a very tight time frame. They gave every bit of energy and devotion which was asked of them. I would think that in terms of their performance they deserve a great deal better from us than to have the whole thing called into question at this stage and a motion set down by the official opposition deploring the misuse and mismanagement of the program.

Mr. Paproski: It is the government, not the youth. You are worse than Pelletier.

Mr. Faulkner: No one in this House and, I am sure, no one across the country will be surprised if among 2,400 projects there are not certain failures. No one will be astonished if among 30,000 workers in the field there are certain failures to meet the commitments of the contract. But we have given an assurance to the House that where there are misgivings about specific projects we will check them out. In this we shall need the support and help of