

*Company of Young Canadians Act*

men and women meet together to make decisions. Yet such a person obviously would find himself operating on his own without support from those around him. In any event, I think the volunteer members could settle his hash by an election at a subsequent time.

The fifth point in respect of this conflict of interest theory is that the volunteer members could choose non-volunteer members. Perhaps they would choose someone who had graduated from the ranks of volunteer members. But they would not be limited by my amendment to choosing from among the volunteers. The sixth argument against this so-called conflict of interest theory, I think, is perhaps as germane as any. I draw a parallel to the directors of corporations because shareholders become directors; in fact, they are required to hold shares before they can become directors. I suppose in that sense one could say there is a certain conflict of interest and that their decisions could affect their own personal fortunes. Yet, this is a very acceptable mode of doing business. No one questions this at all. To continue the parallel, I do not see any reason why, if volunteer members should become members of the board of the Company of Young Canadians, their personal interest and desire to take part in the activities of the Company of Young Canadians should disqualify them.

It is important that there be more objective control of the Company of Young Canadians than there was in the past. I do not intend to go over the history. It is well known, and if I were to do so it would involve a reference to some persons who have been allowed to retreat from the Company of Young Canadians. It was pretty obvious from our studies and discussions that one weakness was the failure to properly research the projects undertaken by the Company of Young Canadians. Volunteer members would rush in to try to correct a situation which probably was not capable of correction. They would leave the community they were trying to serve in a complete state of frustration and would find themselves completely frustrated. Some of these young men and women actually required psychiatric treatment after their service in the Company of Young Canadians. I think this was simply due to the fact that they thought some unpleasant situation, which may have been incapable of correction, required correction or a cure. The result was that they immersed themselves in a frustrating situation and became frustrated themselves.

[Mr. McCleave.]

I can buy the principle of government direction to the point that the overriding authority is there if the government appointees wish to exercise it. But I would hope that if it came down to a real tug-of-war between authority and responsibility in respect of whether some silly project should be approved, common sense and the majority would carry the day.

● (4:10 p.m.)

But I cannot see asking young people to be involved in the donkey work, which again is the guts of the work of the Company of Young Canadians, and not giving them the feeling they have a say in the operations and direction of the Company. It is pretty obvious that the type of youth attracted to the Company of Young Canadians wants the chance to tilt at the establishment, to provide voices for those in need. Their argument is put rather well in a brief submitted to the broadcasting committee on February 3 by the Great Slave Lake Project of the Company of Young Canadians, operating out of Yellowknife. Page 2 of that brief reads in part:

What we are saying is that you cannot seek answers to the problems of groups disenfranchised by a particular system from within that system.

I do not accept that point of view, Mr. Speaker, because later on in the same brief they make the point that many people are disenfranchised because their Members of Parliament are not totally representative of them. But nonetheless, Sir, there is some validity in what they say, and it is useful to have shrill voices of protest to remind us of the places in which we must, as a Parliament, take more action to help those who now live in a permanent shadow-world of despair.

In brief then, Mr. Speaker, I submit that we don't knock over, we don't put the whole thing out of kilter by giving young people some voice in the operations of the Company of Young Canadians. I suggest, Sir, that the over-reaction of government, turning the Company of Young Canadians into a company of bureaucratically run Canadians, is simply too drastic a cure for the problems we discovered when we dealt with the Company of Young Canadians before. I say to the minister that if his desire is to revive and turn the Company of Young Canadians into the useful force that we all hoped it would be when the legislation was originally passed with the blessings of everybody in this House, this approach now will alienate youth and will stultify the desire of youth to provide useful community service.