

Company of Young Canadians Act

to the heart of the matter, there is no real change. Such is the case with sections 3 and 4 that are to be amended in order to change the number of directors and to provide a different procedure of their appointment. That will not change anything, because this is a federal agency, composed of young people, who have to deal with problems that are primarily the concern of provincial authorities. However, at numerous federal-provincial conferences, the provinces, Quebec in particular, expressly asked the federal government to give them the means to carry out their responsibilities. And since they lack the means to look after their needs, they are simply told to shift for themselves in the tax jungle in order to solve their problems. And then, the government introduces legislation itself and does not mind its own business.

Knowing the fantastic amounts of money spent by the Company of Young Canadians, we have a right to ask questions. This is why I say that the Company should have been completely overhauled instead of being superficially reformed, simply because such drastic changes would have made possible in the first place a better total decentralization. All the provinces should agree on that, because I feel that such an organization will never be effective in Quebec. We have now the best proof of this in what has happened.

On the other hand, there already exist youth organizations. They must rely on volunteers alone. They receive no subsidy and in spite of that, they do a tremendous job. If the money allowed to the Company of Young Canadians was paid under the form of grants to the existing agencies, which would then be able to perform the duties the CYC was entrusted with, it would be marvellous. Why create agencies there is no need for? Why should we not abolish what was a failure? There are agencies which would be able to do this work and on which we could rely entirely.

That is the reason why I wanted to point out that every time something is done that encroaches upon exclusively provincial fields of jurisdiction, conflicts arise which very often lead to unfortunate situations such as the one we witnessed.

If the government kept strictly to its own business, it would pay the provinces the compensations they need to carry out theirs. The provinces are closest to the individual and are responsible not only for his welfare and his health but more specifically for his education. And everyone knows that control of educa-

tion is the apple of Quebec's eye. Therefore, an agency controlled from outside the province, out of step with the true spirit of Quebec can only lead to anarchy and the other perturbations we have witnessed.

That is why in my opinion the Company, which has demonstrated its uselessness, not to say its stupidity, should have been either abolished or thoroughly transformed in order to come, as would have been normal, under control of the relevant provincial governments. Unless this is done, expenses will continue to be incurred for an agency that has practically no effectiveness at all, and once again, Canadian taxpayers will have to foot the bill.

[English]

Mr. David Orlikow (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I do not intend to make a long speech, nor do I intend to recall in any detail the debate which took place when this bill was discussed earlier.

I was a member of the committee which dealt with the problems of the Company of Young Canadians, and it is no secret that I was extremely critical of the way in which the Company of Young Canadians had functioned. I still believe that most of the criticisms made of the Company of Young Canadians, and the way in which it had operated almost from the day it was set up were valid criticisms. Nevertheless, it was the government which set up this organization; it was the government which appointed the board responsible for administering it. The government was warned of what was going on, yet it ignored all the warnings and reports which it received until the City of Montreal experienced riots and disorders and until the chairman of the executive council, Mr. Saulnier, made extremely serious charges against the company and the way in which it was being operated. The government then belatedly awoke to the problems facing them, and they over-reacted, as they over-reacted again today.

Let me briefly recapitulate some of the things we learned while the committee held hearings into the problems facing the Company of Young Canadians. The Company of Young Canadians was established under a former Liberal government headed by the then Prime Minister, Mr. Pearson. It had the unanimous support of this House. I was a member of the House at the time, and all members thought that the idea was a good one.