

*Business of Supply*

Bruce that with regard to the problem of manpower which is pointed out in the motion before us—the hon. member is very much aware of the problem; his words have demonstrated this—it is the responsibility of the government to find an answer. This is part of the responsibility of being charged with the administration of government. We do not see these answers coming forth and for this reason some of us are extremely concerned. I am sure this concern is shared not only by those who sit in the opposition benches at the present time.

Canadian manpower development, in other words the development of Canada's human resources, is the most important single factor in the economic growth of this country and, above that, in the entire well being of our Canadian way of life. So, in this special debate today I believe we are dealing with the most vital problem that we face. The hon. member for Simcoe North (Mr. Rynard) has pointed out the problem as it relates to taking care of our sick people and the inadequate resource of properly trained medical people to do this work. But this is just one area of the need that exists. I draw this to the attention of the house once again.

I come back to the reply of the minister this afternoon to the remarks of my leader, the Leader of the Official Opposition (Mr. Stanfield), when he said he was surprised the Leader of the Opposition should bring forward a motion on the subject of manpower resources and student manpower in particular. Perhaps he thinks a little differently now, having listened to what the hon. member for Bruce has said. Twice in the course of his speech the minister expressed his surprise at the action taken by the official opposition. He has had the audacity to suggest that perhaps the motion should be withdrawn. I fail to understand the thinking of the minister in this regard. That the minister should be surprised is a clear indication of what little importance he attaches to some of the problems raised by the Leader of the Opposition.

It is clear that the surprised minister does not regard this problem as being very current, and certainly not very urgent, or he would not have spoken as he did. The request to withdraw the motion is evidence of this. Twice in the course of his speech the minister by inference was critical of the Leader of the Opposition for dealing with the problems of student and graduate manpower resources rather than with the adult labour force. If the minister were following the affairs of the house with any regularity, he would know

[Mr. Thompson.]

that the motion brought forward some weeks ago on the first day allotted to the official opposition dealt with the lagging rate of growth and the problem of unemployment. Consequently, the minister will realize that had we tried to continue that debate today on the problems of the adult labour force it would quite probably have been contrary to the rules of the house.

Perhaps the minister, in commenting on how much the government was doing in providing job opportunities, was referring to the Prime Minister. I have not seen any other reports to justify the minister speaking as he did. I refer to a news report of not too long ago which pointed out that the personal staff of the Prime Minister has been increased by 77 to 288. The number of people employed in the Privy Council office, which serves the Prime Minister and the cabinet, is expected to increase by nearly one-third in this fiscal year, in spite of the widespread freeze on the civil service.

I come back to the remarks of the Leader of the Opposition. What was the context of those remarks? There are just two facts that need to be stated. First, some 88,000 students will be graduating from our colleges and universities this year. This graduation is just a few weeks hence. Although there is a 20 per cent increase over last year in the number of graduates, there is a drastic reduction in the number of jobs available to those graduates. In the long run, Canada simply cannot afford to lose them. Again, I refer to the remarks of the hon. member for Bruce. This fact relates to the ability of the Canadian economy to absorb those who will be graduating from universities and colleges within the next few weeks and seeking permanent careers. This is the crux of the first point made this afternoon by the Leader of the Opposition.

The second fact concerns summer employment for students. There will be more than 360,000 students seeking work. This is quite apart from the number who will be graduating. To some of them, obtaining a job or failure to do so, will make the difference between continuing their education or interrupting it. Already across my desk—and I am sure this is true of every member of the house—there is beginning to flow a stream of letters from students and parents requesting help in this very serious situation. The minister seems to completely miss the point made by the Leader of the Opposition.