

*Company of Young Canadians Act*

amendment to that clause, hon. members will find that 15 members constitute the Council of the Company of Young Canadians, of whom ten are elected by volunteer members and the other five appointed by the governor in council. What the government proposes to do in the bill that is now before us is to appoint seven or nine members by governor in council and none by volunteer members. I suggest that this is a pretty abrupt change and that government control could have been exercised equally effectively by the governor in council appointing the majority of members of the council but leaving some to be selected by volunteer members. I think that the cure is an over-reaction to the problems that were discovered earlier in this session when the Standing Committee on Broadcasting dealt with the affairs of the Company of Young Canadians. It is to bring the thing into proper focus that I present the amendment which has the support of my colleagues and which, I understand, also has the support of my friends to the left. If my amendment does not pass, I will support with equal ardor their amendment.

Both amendments make substantially the same point, that there is room at the top in the Company of Young Canadians for appointees of volunteer members to have their say in shaping the policies. I think it is important that there be some appointees by volunteer members. These appointees could be from the volunteer members themselves or simply people who they think should be on the board of directors. In this way, at least there would be some say in the management of the affairs of the Company of Young Canadians by people acceptable to the volunteers, who really are the guts of the Company of Young Canadians. Without cheerful and willing volunteers, the Company of Young Canadians is ephemeral and only a dream. I am afraid the desire of the government not to have a participatory type of operation at the highest level in the Company of Young Canadians will drive away any support, or at least much of the support, young people would give to the Company of Young Canadians.

• (4:00 p.m.)

I wish I could peel off about 25 or 30 years and be in the position of a volunteer member. I believe I would look at the situation with some suspicion that youth was being condescended to and that father government knows best by simply choosing all the members who run the affairs of the Company of Young Canadians. There is that danger. Certainly,

my amendment and the other amendment overcome that objection. It is true the minister could appoint former volunteer members to the board. I presume at some time when taking part in this debate he will announce that this is exactly his intention. But it is not the same thing.

Former volunteer members may run the risk of being called sort of "Uncle Toms" in the Company of Young Canadians set-up. In any event, they would not be as acceptable as people who were chosen in a proper election by the volunteer members who make up the backbone of the operations of the Company of Young Canadians. When this matter was before the broadcasting committee the strongest point made against selections by volunteer members was something called conflict of interest. Conflict of interest carries an ominous sound. I believe there are about six points which can be made to completely demolish this argument.

In the first place, the conflict of interest idea never really bothered anyone when the original measure was passed because, as I noted earlier, 10 of the 15 were to be selected by the volunteer members. Secondly, we had the interesting exercise in respect of the Telesat bill which, interestingly enough, went before the same committee. People from among the private carriers in the telecommunications industry form part of the board of Telesat Canada. I cannot think of any greater conflict of interest anywhere than in Telesat, yet this did not cause anybody that much concern. Certainly, it did not concern the government.

The third argument to demolish this nonsense about conflict of interest is that the majority of the members on the board would be government appointees. It would be almost impossible to believe that one person appointed by volunteer members could somehow smuggle in something which, although definitely to his own advantage, would be of disadvantage to the Company of Young Canadians. I just cannot conceive of that taking place at all. The fourth point to demolish the argument about conflict of interest has perhaps some validity to those interested in the conflict of interest idea. I refer to the danger that a volunteer member would not see the whole forest for his own trees; that is, he would be so busy promoting something he wanted to see done that he would not be truly representing the interests of the whole group of volunteer members. I suppose this is a possibility whenever any group of