

of seasonal work such as that on farms which went without takers last summer and work with volunteer social agencies which, because they cannot compete with OFY rates, went without young workers in parts of Canada last summer.

The stated figure of 30,000 jobs is negligible enough in light of the total number seeking work. It might be more negligible still if we had a chance to examine the workings of individual programs. Members of Parliament have asked for a full evaluation of projects, but in keeping with the Liberal principle of denying information to parliament only a partial assessment has been provided—a sample of less than one-sixth of the total projects.

In a very serious sense the OFY program contributes to the record levels of unemployment among young Canadians because it gives the government an excuse to do nothing concrete. Whenever they are pressed about youth unemployment, they point with empty pride to OFY. In that sense the program has been of much more use to the government than it has been to the young people of the country.

• (2220)

As a first priority we in this party demand that the government stops the sham of pretending that OFY is a remedy to youthful unemployment. Instead, as a start we want the government to work with the private sector and the provinces to develop a seasonal employment program that works and that provides the basis on which grant and incentive programs might work. We propose the establishment of a Canadian youth employment directorate whose initial responsibility would be to determine the causes of youth unemployment and to work out practical programs which meet the needs of the unemployed. That approach would begin with the recognition that youth unemployment remains a Canadian crisis, whereas the government today treats it as a matter which mere press agency can dismiss.

But if it is a fraud in the fight against unemployment, OFY remains an important innovative program, an instrument to enlist both the creative proposals and the energy of young people across the land. Clearly the program should continue. But it should continue without the burden of its disguise, without the pretence that it is designed to do something it patently cannot do. We in this party particularly approve the reliance upon local initiative and ingenuity. It is a principle we introduced into Canadian legislation with the ARDA program and we hate to see it abused in ARDA or in OFY.

If the government would stop pretending the purpose of OFY is to fight unemployment and would recognize its great potential to put money where the needs are, the program can succeed. We want to see some major modifications. In rural areas in particular there should be a much greater attempt to tie in to the recognized priorities of the regions where the projects proceed. Everywhere there should be an attempt to have projects staffed and inspired by people who know local needs because they are

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local residents. When projects are seen to work, there should be substantial attention given to ensuring that they return next year and are not mere one-summer wonders.

As a start, the government should bring the program to parliament, ensure the impartiality and the permanence of OFY by enshrining it in statute, announce new programs in the House of Commons and let parliament, as the representative of all the people, participate creatively in the development of guidelines and priorities.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilles Marceau (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State):** Mr. Speaker, as the Secretary of State (Mr. Faulkner) pointed out in his press release of January 15, 1973, this summer's program will mainly emphasize benefits to the communities. Our experience of last year with some local advisory committees will be repeated, but on a wider scale, to involve more people. Young people and other designated persons will be called upon to take part in these local advisory committees, which will provide an additional source of consultation for the review and eventual selection of the projects.

Officials of the Department of the Secretary of State, in co-operation with representatives of the provincial governments, have started to identify areas within each province where it would be possible to set up local advisory committees. The selection of these areas will be based on economic and geographical grounds. The committees, where any, will be responsible for providing the officials of the Opportunities for Youth program with additional information on priority needs and on existing services in the communities they represent.

To ensure that these committees really represent the interests of the people they serve, spokesmen for youth, for communities as well as for provincial governments will be invited to participate in these committees. Their thorough knowledge of their surroundings will enable them to determine the primary needs of their community and the resources which will be available. Moreover, representatives elected to sit on these committees will already have an experience of working with youth as well as of social service activities. As far as possible, we shall add representatives from groups which benefit from services provided through community projects of Opportunities for Youth.

Mr. Speaker, within the few minutes left I shall not have the opportunity of taking up the challenge that my hon. friend has sent me and saying more about the Opportunities for Youth program but I can assure him of one thing: I accepted to become affiliated to a party because I believe in the earnestness of this party, and I shall not accept that this program be used as a cover by a political party. It will be—and I am now committing myself—a service reserved for youth and the whole people of our country. During the weeks to come I shall have the opportunity of speaking at some length about the Opportunities for Youth program.

At 10:27 p.m. the House adjourned, without question put, pursuant to Standing Order.