

Unemployment among Youth

pany of Young Canadians. What happened to that? It should have been the answer to many of the problems before us today. Instead of building up the Company of Young Canadians and having it do the job it was intended to do, the government jumped from pillar to post and brought in another program called the Opportunities for Youth. These programs overlapped. They should have been co-ordinated in some way. The Company of Young Canadians seems to have passed into oblivion. Now we have new programs, the Opportunities for Youth program, the Local Initiatives Program, a sort of ad hoc approach to the whole situation. I am not here to criticize. I think perhaps we should offer some constructive suggestions that would help clear up the unholy mess in which the young people find themselves after obtaining an education, whether at a university, a community college or a manpower retraining program.

I intend to keep my remarks along these lines. I wonder how the three levels of government allowed us to get into this situation. Surely, in this computer age it would not have been too much of a task to visualize the future requirements in respect of the various professions and the various disciplines studied at university. Surely, we could have anticipated 4, 8 or 12 years ahead the number of doctors, the number of engineers, the number of lawyers, the number of History and Political Science graduates and so on, that would be required. We should have been able to survey the demand and estimate the number of students which would be required in these various professions.

• (1700)

I am the first to agree that it is very difficult to say to a young fellow or to a young girl whose leanings are toward literature and writing "you should go into engineering" or "you should be a doctor". It should not be very difficult to say to them that four years from now there will be four times as many sociologists or engineers as we need, or the reverse. I do not know why the three levels of government have not joined together to work out a system to provide this information. I grant that education is not the responsibility of the federal government but is a provincial matter. However, we entered the field of education, perhaps by the back door, and since we are there let us give some guidance and direction in this very serious matter.

There is another problem to which we should give serious thought. I am one of those who believe that every young person who goes to university is independent enough to want to pay his own way. Many of these young people do not even want to borrow money from their parents or to obtain a student loan. They want to be able to say that they have earned the money and put themselves through university.

Mr. Knight: They cannot earn that much money.

Mr. Hales: I will tell you how they can earn that money. I will suggest a new approach to education. Let us take the example of a university student who is taking a course in commerce. He can study the theory for three or four months and for the next three or four months he might work for a large company, in a bank or some other place, to get practical experience. His place of work he would

[Mr. Hales.]

not be able to earn a sufficient amount of money to pay his way through university. So I say, let us scrap the student loan program and use the money for that program to subsidize the employer of these students under the work and learn program. Let us say to the student "you will have to learn to save to put yourself through university". He would be proud of the fact that he was able to earn enough money to put himself through university and that he did not even have to ask his father or mother to help him.

There would also be another benefit. The young person, after having worked four months in the profession in which he thought he was interested, might find that this was not what he wanted, that he was in the wrong course. He could stop right there and enroll himself in a course where his interests lie.

I believe that if we adopted such a system as this which would enable students to pay their way through university we would be accomplishing something.

This brings me to another aspect where we are badly adrift, as I see it. I am referring to the guidance counsellors at the high schools and universities. I do not feel they are in tune with what is ahead for our young people, and perhaps the young people are not getting the guidance which they should have. It seems to me that guidance counsellors at high schools and universities are the most important people on the staff and they should be paid the highest salary.

The program that the government introduced 15 months ago called the Opportunities for Youth program is one that I support. I agree with the principle of the program, but I am not satisfied with the way in which it has been operated. First of all, there is the matter of selection of the programs. The selection is being made by someone here in Ottawa, in an ivory tower. How can someone here in Ottawa know which is the best program for a community? Surely, the government should say to the community that they will support an Opportunities for Youth program but they would like the program to have the blessing and the approval of the community. Surely, there are groups of people who should either endorse or reject such a program.

One such program was adopted in my riding. I think the selection was made from an application on a piece of paper which was received here in Ottawa. This particular program happens to interfere with the work of the YM and YWCA. They got \$7,000 for this program, and what was the result? The YWCA was operating the same kind of program before the Opportunities for Youth program was introduced. As a result of the acceptance of the OYP, the people working on the YWCA program lost their jobs, so four people were hired and four people lost their jobs. The net result was zero.

The principle of the program may be all right, but the selection and supervision of these projects leaves much to be desired. Last week I spoke briefly about supervision. I was informed that any expenditure below \$15,000 for these programs would not have to be audited. In other words, when a group of people get \$8,000 or \$10,000 for a program they are not asked to account for the money; they are not required to produce vouchers. If this is a fact, then it is very serious and I for one will make a request,