

Company of Young Canadians Act

of his reasoning on the conflict of interest question, while there may be young people appointed to the council there will not be any volunteer members appointed to the council?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Pelletier: As for the first part of the question, Mr. Speaker, I believe there is a great difference between an undertaking like the Company of Young Canadians, that is, a company engaged in pioneer social work among underprivileged people, and the pursuit of studies on a university campus.

If this distinction is not quite clear to the hon. member, I am sorry, because I cannot dwell on that point.

For me, this distinction is quite clear, and I must say that I am not at all opposed to student representation on university senates, in spite of the fact that the students themselves are beginning to find rather relative the influence they can exert from this minority representation.

In reply to the second part of the question of the hon. member, I wish to tell him that it is quite out of the question for the government to refuse to appoint ex-volunteers to the Council. On the contrary, we would be most happy to appoint people with experience in the Company of Young Canadians and who would put their wisdom and the fruit of their experience at the service of the Company. But for the reasons that I tried to explain and in which I firmly believe, I contend that those who are now volunteers in the Company should not be appointed to the executive Council.

[*English*]

Mr. Rose: I rise on a question of privilege, to be followed by a question to the minister. I had difficulty following the minister in the translation, which is my fault, not his. I believe he stated that I either said or implied that young men and women appointed rather than elected to the council would somehow cease to be young men and women. If I heard the minister correctly, I feel this is kind of a strawman argument. I do not believe I implied that at all. Perhaps we can both look at each other's speech tomorrow.

My question with respect to the conflict of interest is, how does the minister justify his position that three members, who may or may not be volunteers but elected by the volunteers, can have a great conflict of interest with perhaps 30 or 40, or hopefully more than that, projects across Canada?

[*Mr. Nowlan.*]

Mr. Pelletier: My answer will be very simple, Mr. Speaker. It is experience that tells me that. Even in meetings of the previous council, where there was only a minority of volunteers, it was enough sometimes—and I do not think I am mistaken in stating this—to disrupt the whole meeting and to make the work of the council totally unproductive. I do not think it is a bogus argument. I regret if my interpretation of the hon. member's words went a little bit too far, but when he said that the fact the government was appointing the members of the council would, in a certain way, be a departure from the principle of participation of the young people, I thought he was suggesting that they ceased to be young people from the moment they were appointed. I say that the directors we will appoint will be young people who will be participating as such. That is what I mean.

• (4:50 p.m.)

[*Translation*]

Mr. René Matte (Champlain): Mr. Speaker, I would like to comment on a few aspects of the amendment to the Company of Young Canadians Act.

Earlier, I was listening to the minister who was trying to justify some mistakes. Of course, it is difficult to correct a situation when all solutions are eliminated in advance. In fact, the government discarded one of the most logical solutions regarding the Company of Young Canadians: its abolition which should have been seriously considered. When an agency ends up in a failure, its dissolution is one of the solutions to be considered.

But since this magnificent idea came from a former prime minister and was maintained by his spiritual son, they do not want to publicly lose face. That is the real reason why they refuse to consider seriously the possibility of simply abolishing that Company.

An alternative would be to alter it completely and entrust its administration to provincial authorities.

The basic mistake has been to establish an organization of young people who were directly under provincial responsibility. This is so true that if an attempt is made to determine where more difficulties arose it is found to be in Quebec, simply because right from the start, the Company did not impress Quebecers in the least.

So, it was easy to create cells within the Company, with the unfortunate results we heard about in committee.

Mr. Speaker, that is the real problem, and every time that the solutions sought fail to go