

Employment Programs

One of the most successful programs introduced last year was the student militia program. It was heartening to learn that this year the program would be expanded from 5,000 to 8,000. It was also heartening to learn that this year the program would be expanded to include meaningful civilian employment and leadership training. But imagine how discouraging it is now to find that the program is being cancelled in some parts of Canada, due primarily and utterly to lack of preparation and attention to the support facilities required. I knew, just as sure as I am standing here, that such a problem would arise because I was aware of the lack of support services to cope with the program last year.

To give an example of how much the government listens when someone in the opposition tries to help, as long ago as last March 25 I asked the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Macdonald) if, in view of the extension of the student militia program to include armouries which are administered mainly by militia units, he would announce as soon as possible the quotas for provinces to ensure that the district headquarters would be able to request logistic support and instructional staff from regular army resources to maintain the training program. The minister replied that he would keep the representation in mind. What happened? About three days ago one armoury in my constituency was informed that its program would be cancelled due to a shortage of instructional staff, and that 25 students would now be denied the opportunity to participate in the program. This, to me, demonstrates an out-and-out lack of regard for representations made by Members of Parliament, let alone lack of regard for our people.

As recently as April 1 I introduced a motion under Standing Order 43 asking the government to extend the deadline for submissions under the Opportunities for Youth program because it was obvious to me that information was not being received by many isolated communities which were beyond the reach of the news media and far away from Manpower centres. As usual, nobody listened to a reasonable request, with the result that many communities submitted projects too late or even now have not heard about the program, although they may finally have heard about their right to equal opportunity. These are the places where students will never get a university education, Mr. Speaker, because they will never be able to afford it and will never get the message of equal opportunity no matter where they live.

As late as March 30 last, as recorded in *Hansard* and as reflected in a question by the hon. member for Cape Breton-The Sydneys (Mr. Muir), some Manpower offices did not have information concerning the program to pass on to residents. As late as March 24 and 29 I asked the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Lang), since it was obvious that information was not reaching people in the provinces of highest unemployment, if quotas would be allocated to assure those parts of Canada some portion of the moneys. Again there was a matter-of-fact answer that indicated passive interest.

Upon reviewing the many projects submitted it is obvious that our youth have shown that they have initiative

[Mr. Marshall.]

and original ideas. Most of the projects are worthy of commendation. There is also a clear indication that our adult citizens are willing to help the government by showing leadership to students in promoting worth-while projects. It is heartening to note the number of projects for campaigns to clean-up our roads, beaches and riversides, projects to help the poor, the aged, the disabled, the mentally ill and projects to promote youth development and medical centres where there is a crisis because of lack of facilities. This is truly commendable. But what about the disappointment that will be experienced when many projects are turned down because of lack of information or lack of funds? Again, this emphasizes lack of appreciation at the planning stage.

Who will explain to these people why their projects were turned down? Just the other day we received a letter from the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) saying the government would allow Members of Parliament—even Members of Parliament on the opposition side—to pass out the cheques for some of these projects. I do not want to pass out these cheques. I would much rather he told me what I can tell Canadians in areas where unemployment is highest whose projects have been refused, and how I can explain why the Department of National Defence had to cut back on promised projects because of lack of funds. How can I justify making these excuses when they ask me, "How is it the government can spend \$7½ million on Information Canada, with a \$2 million annual budget, and they do not know what is going on?" Perhaps the government has learned some lessons by now. I am willing to give them the benefit of the doubt and say that they might listen.

● (5:40 p.m.)

The idea of the program is good and I hope the government will make an assessment of the lessons that can be learned from mistakes of the past. The first thing to be done is to ask each project leader to make a report on the advantages gained from the program and their estimation of the faults as well as their recommendations for improvement and new ideas. I think that the government, instead of authorizing polls to be carried out across Canada to see how popular they are, should authorize polls to be carried out to learn the thinking of students to ask for their critique of the program and to ask for new ideas.

The government must as soon as possible draw up a program for next year with a deadline for the output of information. I should like to offer some ideas which I think might be worth while. I suggest that the government should direct more attention to anti-pollution measures beyond the probe stage. They should direct more attention to helping the incapacitated. They should direct qualified students to participate in recreational programs for the really young to help overcome our poor efforts toward physical fitness, which is generally recognized.

We should form teams of students to go across this country to tabulate each and every unacceptable home and to help realistically to direct more funds to housing projects where people who are too poor are living in