

## ENTHUSIASTIC RESPONSE TO SUMMER YOUTH PROGRAMS

Mr. Gérard Pelletier, Secretary of State, made the following report to the House of Commons on April 22 on the result of submissions in response to the Federal's Government's program of summer youth programs <sup>(1)</sup>:

...As you are aware, the Opportunities for Youth program, for which \$14.7 million has been allocated, is but one aspect of the overall 1971 summer employment program. As well, there are the traditional employment programs in the Public Service, the militia, travel and exchange, hostels and kiosks, language-training and athletic scholarships which, in all, account for a total expenditure of \$57.8 million. All these programs have been most favourably received and are well in progress.

It can be said without exaggerating that in every part of the country, in large urban centres and rural communities, young people have responded to the Opportunities for Youth program with an enthusiasm, generosity and imagination which provide tangible and striking proof of the creative ability of the young generation and its desire to contribute to the economic and social development of our society.

### PROVINCE RESPONSE

To date, from all parts of Canada, we have received more than 8,600 proposals representing a total value of approximately \$150 million. More than 148,000 jobs would be created by these projects if they could all be implemented. The vast majority of jobs, or 50,000, would be created in the Province of Quebec through 2,485 schemes involving a cost of \$59 million. Ontario follows closely with 2,900 proposals for the creation of 47,900 jobs at a cost of \$40.8 million.

From British Columbia, 833 proposals were received for the creation of 14,000 jobs at a cost of \$17.1 million. From the Prairies came 1,000 proposals for 14,600 jobs at a cost of \$15.6 million, and from the Maritimes, 1,410 projects for 19,800 jobs at a cost of \$17.2 million.

### TYPE OF PROPOSAL

What are the students proposing? To offer rehabilitation services for blind children; to assist remote pockets of the population which have little or no access to medical and dental care or to the social services available in major centres; to undertake community-development projects which would be unprofitable for the private or public sector; to conduct scientific or sociological research designed to produce immediate benefits to the community; to establish contact with the disadvantaged segments of the population, elderly persons and transient youth to

encourage them to take part in examining and solving their own problems.

Several proposals are of a cultural nature. Theatre companies will perform in remote areas. Several young people will organize workshops to enable persons who do not normally have access to the visual arts to become acquainted with this field.

There is something contagious about the idealism of youth. Nevertheless, if public funds are to be used to meet this idealism, a number of Government requirements must be satisfied.

### SELECTION CRITERIA

As you are aware, by the criteria established for the program, proposals which do not involve sufficient student participation or represent merely a financial extension of provincial or municipal services may not be approved; also excluded are profit-oriented schemes and projects which would benefit only those whom they would employ, etc. Each project is carefully assessed and will be approved only if we are sufficiently assured of its successful implementation.

The Opportunities for Youth Secretariat, which is responsible for the study of all project applications, presents its recommendations to a committee of senior officials of my Department. Before any decision is taken, provincial and municipal governments concerned are consulted, as well as other federal departments, to establish the validity and viability of projects. Finally, a federal interdepartmental committee oversees the program to ensure that it is carried out in accordance with the criteria established and announced earlier by the Government.

Despite the size of the demand and the value of the projects, the Government must pick and choose. Beginning next week, authors of the proposals will be informed of decisions reached, a process which will continue to mid-May so that all projects may be fairly and equally assessed. Some persons have doubted the students' ability to respond in time to the Prime Minister's challenge. The number of applications belies that suggestion. I wish to assure all those who have taken up the challenge that the Government on its side will respond to their requests in good time.

Finally, one thing is certain, Mr. Speaker. Because of the very nature of the program, what government support is enabling young people to accomplish will not reduce the level of employment in other sectors of the labour market.

<sup>(1)</sup> See *Canadian Weekly Bulletin*, Vol. 26, No. 15, dated April 14, 1971, P. 1.