

to innovate action but to avoid it. It is very easy when discussing unemployment statistics to lose sight of the human consequence involved, and forget that each one of these 300,000 young Canadians is a single case of need.

One way to gain perspective on the youth employment problem is to realize there are about twice as many young Canadians out of work today as there were in the great depression. Now, if you treat people as statistics, you can say that is not significant, because the work force has grown but if you regard people as people, you might remember the record of personal hardship and bitterness spawned in that period when so many people started what should have been their working lives without work to do. What is particularly cruel about unemployment among the young is that so many young people have no other resources to fall back on and no real preparation for being unwanted as workers. And what is particularly dangerous about unemployment among the young is that the experience and attitudes which young Canadians develop now will last their lifetime. If they are herded into welfare or if they are taught that their energies are unwanted, that will shape their lives and could deprive our nation and themselves of their creative participation.

There is another aspect of this question. It is a myth that has grown up, the myth that kids in Canada are lazy. I think that the existence of that myth protects the government against its clear responsibility to take action to end the high and unacceptable rates of unemployment among the young. One of the tragic aspects of this is that the Prime Minister himself has contributed, perhaps not deliberately, to the view that kids in Canada do not want to work when he made his offhand remarks that anyone who wanted work in Canada should go to Thompson, Manitoba or some other distant spot. The people who suffer most from this misleading suggestion are the young people in the country.

Prior to those comments, there was some substantial sympathy for the problems of the unemployed young, but that sympathy evaporated when the Prime Minister casually entered the fray. In fact, Mr. Speaker, while the work ethic may not recommend itself to a barefoot boy from Outremont, a study by the Canadian Council on Social Development of young Canadians who applied for social assistance in November, 1971 indicated:

The young social assistance applicants who were interviewed have by no means rejected the concept of work and its central importance to their development and self-fulfillment.

They do not reject work, they just cannot find any. So long as the government caters or contributes to the opinion that they do not want work, their problems will continue to be ignored.

We are dealing here with a budget which will do much less than it pretends. It is the budget of a parlour magician, relying on illusion, trying to trick the people who are watching. The minister held out the illusion of using tax cuts to put more purchasing power into the economy, yet in reality the total revenues of the government will be \$1.7 billion higher this year than last. He talks buoyantly of creating 300,000 new jobs as he has talked before and failed, yet in reality is accepting unnecessarily high levels of unemployment. He talks about expansion, yet under-stimulates. He worries about inflation, yet has no

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response except a so-called contingency plan which he proposes to produce like a rabbit from a hat.

What is wrong with this budget is its purpose. At a time when the government should be preoccupied with providing jobs and growth and some stability, it is instead preoccupied with its own political survival. So, instead of introducing measures which are bold enough to work, the government relies instead on measures which seem safe enough to serve. Other speakers in this debate have indicated how far short the minister will fall of his stated goals. My particular concern today is to underline the urgency of a goal he did not state, the goal of helping young Canadians put their energies to work and to review some of the steps which the government's own advisers have urged as a means to break the shackling pattern of high unemployment among the young.

• (1720)

The Hunter Committee on Youth published its report 19 months ago, and it was heralded with that special enthusiasm this government reserves for reports it proposes to ignore. One simple, but highly valuable, recommendation of that report was that the government at least recognize that youth unemployment constitutes a special problem in Canada. At the moment, we have virtually no hard information about the special causes of high youth unemployment, about its relation to the education system, about the effectiveness of counselling or manpower, about the need and scope for new kinds and definitions of work. The Hunter Committee recommended establishing a Canadian youth employment directorate, and generally we in this party approve of that initiative, at least as an interim measure. The government has done nothing about the directorate.

The report of the Canadian Council on Social Development, entitled "A Right to Opportunity" reveals a chaos in the counselling and social assistance services available to young Canadians out of work. They recommend an early federal-provincial conference, to bring some order and equity to that field. The government has done nothing. This party has suggested that LIP and OFY be given statutory authority, so that their purposes can be debated and understood in parliament and so that they can assume some permanent place in the program structure of various government and voluntary agencies, instead of being expensive itinerants whose present status prohibits integrated national programming. The government declines that commitment as, indeed, it declines any commitment to do anything at all about the continuing crisis of youth unemployment. The government has been running away from the problem and the running has to stop. We cannot afford the enormous human cost of training hundreds of thousands of young people to be out of work and on welfare. We are wasting lives and wasting potential.

The problem of youth employment would be less acute in an economy performing nearer its potential. So, the approach of this party, outlined Thursday by the hon. member for Don Valley (Mr. Gillies), will help the young to find jobs and will help other Canadians. Even so, it will be necessary to take special measures to arrest or reverse the trends towards higher and higher levels of unemployment among Canadians age 24.