

Student Summer Employment

The program is good as far as it goes. The only criticism I have is that it comes too late. University students have been out of college already for one month. One only has to drive down the Trans-Canada highway from Winnipeg to Banff, which I did recently, to see large numbers of students thumbing rides to go to places where they hope they can find employment, just like the average man in the 1930's rode the rods trying to find a job.

So I say that although this program will be helpful to 36,000 students, it will not help those who are still unemployed. I repeat that there are 450,000 students in Canada, many of whom are looking for work. If they do not find work this summer they will not be able to return to university in the fall. In addition, we must remember that, as has been brought out, unemployment in Canada is 6.6 per cent of the work force in this country. If we add to this figure the number of unemployed university students and other students from our high schools and colleges, there must be pretty close to 800,000 unemployed in this country, and that to me is a serious situation.

Mr. McGrath: Close to a million.

Mr. Woolliams: Yes, we will not be very far from that figure. I say with great respect that this is no time to gloat. Our greatest resource in Canada is our human resource. If we neglect our youth, we will have neglected the finest resource we have.

Only a month ago I asked the minister, when this problem first arose as university students were leaving college, whether he would present a program similar to the one he presented today but also go even farther and bonus business and industry to stimulate and motivate them to take on students so that all students, irrespective of class, would have employment and be able to return to the universities they have been attending.

Finally, we must realize that the 36,000 students are only equivalent in number to the student population of two universities in western Canada. When one considers the number of universities across this country and the number of young men now hunting desperately for employment, not only graduates and undergraduates but high school students and students in vocational training schools, I say to the minister on behalf of the ones who will obtain jobs: thank you very much but the program is too late and is too inadequate.

Mr. Lorne Nysirom (Yorkton-Melville): Mr. Speaker, may I say at the outset that I

[Mr. Woolliams.]

am very happy that the minister has recognized the problem of student employment this year. I congratulate him for recognizing the need to spend additional government money on employing an extra 5,800 students in the government services this year. I am also happy that the minister has opened an extra 33 special offices to serve students seeking jobs this summer and that he is staffing the offices with students. I wish we could have done these things about a month and a half ago when they could have helped quite a few students who have been unemployed since classes stopped in the middle of April.

I do not think we should now put away our books and forget about the student summer employment problem, because it will not go away. The minister's program will be helpful but more jobs are going to be needed.

I have just completed a survey of the major universities in Canada. I have been telephoning placement officers on their campuses and have learned that they have major problems this year. I should like to take one or two minutes to point out three or four of them. First, I think the student employment problem is linked directly to the whole unemployment picture in Canada and to the economic slowdown we are now experiencing. I find that almost every major university is having more difficulty this year than they had last year in obtaining adequate employment for students this summer.

Second, I find that even though a student has a job it may not be one that pays him adequate money to enable him to return to university in the fall of 1970. Other students only have part-time jobs and cannot expect to work for any more than two or three months this summer.

The third point I want to make is that I found through my survey that particular difficulty is encountered by women students in finding adequate jobs in the cities and towns of this country.

I should like to underline two additional points. One is that there are special regional problems in student employment as there are in many other facets of Canadian life and society. I believe we will need extra help and more emergency or special programs in places such as Saskatchewan, which is suffering from an economic slowdown, and in the Maritimes and rural Quebec. I think this is very important.

I also believe that in dealing with the whole problem of student employment we should