

has not been able to plan to cope with the basic need for employment in our country.

I can understand such a situation arising if an emergency came about suddenly. But since the government was aware in years past that the problem would recur, that this need would arise each year, it should not have failed to provide the leadership to cope with the situation, having been warned by the Dominion Bureau of Statistics, the Economic Council of Canada, and especially having been warned by every member of this House of Commons.

As long ago as last September the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Stanfield) warned the government of a recurrence of this situation when at the last minute the government introduced some makeshift program to provide student employment. Instead of starting to plan at that time for the following year, the government simply hoped that the problem would run away. Instead of consolidating its position, making an assessment of the situation, learning some lessons from its previous errors and making some improvements on the 1970 program, the government was content to rest on its laurels.

In March of this year, it produced another program which was too late to provide an over-all plan to benefit the greatest number. Instead of starting last fall, after the 1970 program was completed, to plan for this year and introducing a program early enough, what has happened? True to form, the government announced its 1971 program on March 16 with deadlines for submission of projects too soon thereafter. As a result, proper communication of information to those areas where the need was greatest was denied. True to form, this government made its usual announcement about how concerned it was about unemployed Canadians, especially students, which sounds wonderful over the news media but produces, in fact, too little too late. The announcement by the Prime Minister was of the usual type. He repeated, as he does too often, the concern his government has for all Canadians in need.

• (5:30 p.m.)

It is worth while repeating some of his words about this government's concern for the almost two million students who would be seeking jobs and the rest who would be in search of other equally meaningful summer activities. It is in the national interest, he said, that the wishes of as many persons as possible in each category be accommodated. He also said that the advantages of summer employment are so obvious, however, in terms of self-support, of broadening of outlook, of acquisition of new skills and experience that every effort by governments to assist is justified. The Prime Minister further said that there is equal justification for assisting students who do not seek work but who want to occupy their summer vacations in undertaking other rewarding and worth-while activities. That may be wonderful speech writing, Mr. Speaker, but there has been little in the way of meaningful action. When these words were being uttered to the country there was not one bit of planning in progress to set up the administrative support to get the program in motion.

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Employment Programs

I visited the offices of the Opportunities for Youth program just before the deadline for submission of projects. They were still setting up the offices in a makeshift manner. There was only one telephone. There was no office space and there were no desks. They were running around like a bunch of—well, I don't know what. Only days before the deadline for the submission of projects some Manpower centres were still not aware of the program. Mr. Speaker, there are places in this country where the people still are not aware of the Opportunities for Youth program despite all the public relations experts and the advertising agencies. It makes me wonder what Information Canada has been doing all this time.

As recently as three weeks ago some Manpower centres in this country had no details of the student militia and civilian employment programs. Ever since the program was announced it has progressed by accident rather than design; and the credit for the little progress it has made is due to the staff who have worked under the most trying circumstances because of lack of fundamental preparation on the part of the government. Despite all the fanfare about and expression of the good deeds of the government, the whole point of the problem was missed.

The aim of the exercise is to provide employment opportunities for the students of our country who need money in order to further their education. They need money because financing their education creates hardship for parents who cannot afford it. It is as simple as that. If they can provide the \$67 million to finance such a program, all credit to the government. If the money is hard to come by—which I appreciate—and the government cannot provide enough to assure everyone a job, then the solution is again simple. Every last copper of the \$67 million should have been directed toward helping those who cannot afford to pay for their education.

It is fine for the government to provide programs whereby students can travel Europe. It is fine to provide moneys for students to hitch-hike across Canada to learn about our great country. But when so many of our youth are denied an education in our affluent society because they cannot afford it, then for the love of God let us consider what our priorities are. If the government refuses to recognize the fact that there are five million poverty-stricken Canadians because of senseless priorities, then let us direct our spending to help educate the children first. If we want to teach our youth to stand together and understand together, let us introduce meaningful participatory programs wherein we can use their knowledge and direct their understanding to useful purposes by helping those who are unable to help themselves.

Our great country was built through the hard work of our parents and their ancestors and we have produced some pretty good citizens. Let us continue on that course and give students some responsibility to help us, and not send them on the road because we want to get rid of them, with the camouflaged excuse of believing that they are gaining something which will make them better Canadians.