

Economic Growth and Employment Situation

A while ago, a member of the New Democratic Party mentioned very simple work in conjunction with the development of our land, our rivers, our towns and cities.

Some of our streams could be developed in order to attract the tourist trade, and with most interesting financial results. Should the matter be fully looked into and the required facilities be provided in order to promote such projects?

I sincerely hope that my brief remarks will prompt the government to take constructive action. I am not one of those who only make negative criticism. On the contrary, it is my responsibility to suggest certain measures but it is up to the government to listen to us and take action. In this case, we might hope that the Canadian people will regain their confidence in their governments, because at present, that confidence seems to have lessened. Of course, up to a certain point, governments are right but, in my opinion, members of the opposition must keep challenging the government if they want it to have a better understanding of its responsibilities. The members' participation in the drafting of legislation would result in a better quality of life and in a better climate for all Canadians.

Mr. C.-A. Gauthier (Roberval): Mr. Speaker, I will be brief. First of all, as it is the day of the New Democratic Party and that they were very nice when they let us discuss our motion last Tuesday, I will try to be as brief as possible.

I wish to commend the New Democratic Party for the motion it has introduced today. It supplements somewhat the statement made on March 16, 1971 by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) when he announced his employment and activities program for students.

When listening to the Prime Minister making his announcement, I immediately understood that it was a statement well structured and oriented towards an ideal to be achieved. Besides, he said in his statement that everyone must have an ideal, but that the problem lies in achieving it. I wish to draw hon. members' attention on these points today. The problem we are dealing with, Mr. Speaker, is very important since it affects the young generation. No one in this House could remain irreceptive to its implications.

We understand the government's difficulties with unemployment. There are approximately 700,000 unemployed and thousands of people on welfare. Soon, nearly 990,000 of the 1,800,000 students from our schools will be unable to find employment. We recognize that this is a very serious problem for the government.

This problem must be faced and all members of this House should partake in a collective effort to solve it in the best possible way.

I take exception to the fact that the government once more is late this year in applying his programs. I am afraid our conclusions might be the same as last year. The programs had been introduced too late and approximately 60 per cent of the students, during their holidays—at least in my area—kept looking for work, with the result that by the end of their holidays, they were

nowhere near their goal. They could earn absolutely nothing. This is the situation I dread again this year, on account of this delay.

Right after the statement from the Prime Minister, three students from the University of Ottawa happened to be in my office. I told them: According to the Prime Minister's statement, you have to inquire from the departments, since there is nothing definite; he only told us that four departments would look after the operation of the program and that eight or nine categories of jobs would be created.

At that point we started phoning the Departments of the Secretary of State, National Health and Welfare, Manpower and Immigration. We were referred back from one department to the other. They said: At the present time there is nothing definite or clear. Call the Manpower office.

So I did. At both Manpower offices in my area, they replied: Mr. Gauthier, we know no more than you do about it. Whatever we know we learned through the newspapers.

● (4:30 p.m.)

We would be justified in asking ourselves some important questions. This is why Information Canada has today forwarded to me a synopsis of programs set up by the four ministers who will be concerned with providing jobs to students.

The hon. Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier) will be able to spend approximately \$29 million for the implementation of four separate programs: Opportunities for youth, Transient youth service, Group travel and Language training. The same will apply to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) who will seek to establish training camps for athlete-students and to the manpower offices where youth centres will eventually be established.

I contacted the offices in my riding and was told that a student had been asked to handle qualified candidates and they are still wondering whether they will find any.

I believe that we will have to contact these offices immediately in order to staff them adequately. I think that in the riding of Roberval which is fairly large, there are only two manpower centres. Five students per office would not be too many to try and administer the proposed program.

Hon. members will note that I am not criticizing the program directly; I am simply criticizing the delay in its introduction and at the end we will know whether it is effective or not.

Such a program should have been introduced, as some professors believe, at the beginning of January so as to enable school authorities to let the students know about it so that they would be well-informed at the end of the school year.

Unfortunately, everything will be done quickly, everybody will run and people will realize that no organization was selected to find employment, to organize groups of workers, which will be the cause of great difficulties.

[Mr. La Salle.]