

# HOUSE OF COMMONS

Thursday, April 22, 1971

The House met at 2 p.m.

[Translation]

## ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

### YOUTH

#### STATEMENT OF SECRETARY OF STATE ON OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH PROGRAM

**Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Secretary of State):** Mr. Speaker, on March 16, the Prime Minister made the following statement in the House of Commons:

[English]

We are saying, in effect, to the youth of Canada that we are impressed by their desire to fight pollution, that we believe they are well motivated in their concern for the disadvantaged; that we have confidence in their value system. We are also saying that we intend to challenge them to see if they have the stamina and the self-discipline to follow through on their criticism and advice.

[Translation]

Since the closing date for the submission of proposals under the Opportunities for Youth program, April 15, is now past, I should like to report briefly to the House on student response to the Prime Minister's challenge.

As you are aware, the Opportunities for Youth program for which \$14.7 million have been allocated is but one aspect of the over-all 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 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.

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.

• (2:10 p.m.)

[English]

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.

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.

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