

Naturally as Minister of Labour I must accept full responsibility for advocating the setting up of the youth employment committee and also for this item now before us. It was as a result of the study by the youth employment committee that the recommendation was made that a sum should be placed in the estimates this year to provide for special training projects for unemployed young people. I think I am quite within the facts when I say that this item as it appears in the estimates was a result of the setting up of this special committee of the national employment commission.

A further question arises as to the manner in which this sum can be expended to the greatest advantage. The youth employment committee made a number of reports directly to the national employment commission. The commission gave further study to these reports and made definite recommendations to the government. In these reports the suggestion was made that this money could be expended to the best advantage in some provinces upon forestry projects or upon projects which would enable unemployed young men to fit themselves for work in the primary industries of those particular provinces. For example, in British Columbia, where there is a very large forest reserve and lumbering is a basic industry, it was suggested that it would be most desirable that the training projects there should relate to forestry or to mining, another important industry in the province. So far as the western provinces are concerned, there is an obvious advantage in having training projects directed rather towards employment in agriculture in one of its forms or conceivably in the building trades. We have had some definite representations with regard to the need for further skilled labour in the building trades in some of the western provinces. In the central provinces there is need also for work in the forests, particularly fire protection, and we have under consideration the establishment of a small corps of young unemployed men who will gain experience and as well, we believe, a wholesome acquaintance with the outdoors in the protection of the forests.

Mr. MacNICOL: They will have first to cut roads into the forest.

Mr. ROGERS: That may be necessary.

Mr. MacNICOL: Not may be; they must.

Mr. ROGERS: I am willing to accept that as a necessary part of the work; of course, I am speaking in general terms. The hon. gentleman is familiar with the work of reforestation, but some of the general projects might very well cover that aspect of it.

[Mr. Rogers.]

Mr. MacNICOL: That is a splendid way to employ young men.

Mr. ROGERS: Then we have in the maritime provinces certain proposals with respect to the training of young men for hard rock mining and in New Brunswick for forest work.

In all that we seek to do under this vote we are going to try to secure a proper sense of direction through which we may be able later if the necessity should continue to concentrate our efforts upon particular measures of re-establishment. I should like to point out to the committee, however, that it would be neither wise nor practical to indicate one pre-digested plan, so to speak, which would apply generally throughout the dominion. We are of the opinion, especially where we have in view that this action should be taken in co-operation with the provinces, that the training projects should be related as far as possible to the basic industries of the province wherein unemployment exists. There is also, and I believe it is becoming more evident each day, a growing need for training some of our young unemployed in the skilled trades. That applies particularly in certain branches of the building industry. Hon. members are well aware that this industry has been passing through a very acute depression. It has not responded as quickly to the forces of recovery as have some other industries in the country. At the same time it is now becoming recognized in some of the larger cities that we may have a real shortage in the building and construction industry. We propose to discuss with the provincial governments of the more industrialized provinces the feasibility of arranging special classes for unemployed young people in such trades as are most likely to ensure their early absorption into the economic life of the country.

Mr. HEAPS: Will the minister consult the trade unions to ascertain what in their opinion are the best trades to which young men should be apprenticed?

Mr. ROGERS: We propose to do just that. I am glad the hon. gentleman has mentioned it at this time. In our earlier conversations we have had consultations with representatives of the various trade unions concerned, and certainly in any final action taken we shall have the benefit of their views.

I believe I have indicated in a general way, with as much particularity as is possible at this time, what we propose to do under this vote. I do not suggest that it is more than an approach to the larger problem. At the same time, from all that I have been able to gather in recent months, there is no feature of the general unemployment problem that challenges