

Business of Supply

As I have already mentioned, the department itself will be hiring some 335 students to help organize and run the campaign. We have also been active in attempts to enlist the co-operation of other agencies which are concerned with this question. My officials have been meeting, for instance, with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada which is urging its members to create local committees to help improve student employment possibilities. A number of these committees have been established in various parts of the country and we welcome the self-help efforts made by the students themselves. It is my hope that through working with these committees and other bodies more will be learned about student employment. Through surveys and the analysis of our own records we hope to find out more about the student experience on the labour market.

Statistics about placements are useful, but it is my view that students do not want just a job. They want work which is socially useful and challenging. I have discovered through my meetings with students that it is not just jobs they want but work which has some social meaning to it—tasks which are related, somehow, to the development of the country or the provision of some social service. The hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) referred to this aspect of student employment when he suggested we might embark on a program to enlist students in socially useful activities. This is something we have under consideration as a means not only of providing jobs and incomes for students, but also the kind of work which has a socially meaningful content.

● (4:50 p.m.)

For example, some time ago an hon. member referred to the fact that the department had authorized, as it has for some years, the bringing in of labour from the Caribbean under the agricultural program. It is true that we have authorized this seasonal movement of agricultural workers into Ontario. If the same number is reached as in former years there will be about 1,200 black workers from the Caribbean coming to work in the province of Ontario.

The question has been asked: Why do you not retain these jobs for students? Aside from the fact that these jobs are important to the economy of the Caribbean as well as important to the growers who want a segment of the labour force that is experienced, this summer about 160,000 persons will be required for the agricultural labour force in

[Mr. MacEachen.]

the province of Ontario. Thus there will be ample opportunity for students who want to take on this kind of work. In our manpower centres we are going to make it a point to give students first chance to take on these jobs in the agricultural areas of Ontario. We believe this will provide large numbers of students with the opportunity of adding to their income as well as taking part in this industry in the course of the summer months.

Aside from possibilities along these lines there is still a demand among the young people of this country for jobs that are socially meaningful. It is difficult for employers, both in government and in private organizations, to provide meaningful jobs on a short term basis during the summer months when such activities usually require supervision over a period of time. However, because it is difficult is no reason for not attempting to do so.

Mr. Hales: Would the minister permit a question on bringing in help from other countries? Does he not think that Canadian students should be given the first opportunity to fill these positions? Rather than bringing in people from other countries for these jobs, could they not be made available to Canadian students?

Mr. MacEachen: I have been trying to deal with that question. There are quite a number of interests involved here. As I recollect the situation there will be a requirement for about 160,000 seasonal workers in agriculture this summer in Ontario. The movement of workers from the Caribbean will likely reach about 1,200 workers. So the opportunities that can be made available to Canadian students will not be seriously reduced by workers from the Caribbean, and we must also bear in mind the importance of this movement to the governments of these countries.

In concluding this aspect of my remarks about summer employment for students I should like to say we are very concerned about the problem. We have undertaken a very intensive publicity and organizational campaign. We have encouraged other government departments to hire as many students as possible this summer, and we are urging the private sector of our economy to review their priorities and to make a special effort to create jobs for Canadian students. It may be a very long and hot summer in Canada.

I believe a successful solution to the unemployment problem as far as the students are concerned does not rest exclusively with the