

it is wrong to think the government is complacent or that the problem will disappear along with growing employment. I feel very strongly that we are living in an age in which the young people of Canada rank among the finest ever produced in this nation.

I have said on many occasions publicly that I sense this to be a time at which, in essence, civilization, if one may use that expression, pauses to take stock, almost as though we had reached another plateau and begun, from that plateau, to question values which had hitherto been accepted uncritically. The young people of this generation are very wonderful people. They have made the politicians of our generation, not only in Canada but in the United States and other countries, pause to take stock, to consider where they are going, what their philosophy should be. Most of the young people I know, in Montreal at least—and I spend a lot of time with them—are looking for jobs. They want jobs, but they need an education as well. In addition to finding employment, they are interested in the quality of their lives. They are questioning the continued existence of slums. They are wondering why there should be so much unemployment when there are so many things to be done to improve the quality of life. They are wondering why in a day of advanced technology we should tolerate poverty and pollution.

It is my belief that the present generation, having posed these questions, will not tolerate a generation of politicians in the future who fail to provide the solutions to those problems. It is because we find before us a myriad of opportunities for improvement in this country and in the world that I am not one of those who endorse the concept of obliging people to retire prematurely in order to give a chance to the young. If we marshal our forces properly and know where we are going as a nation, we can do a great deal to improve quality of life while at the same time reducing unemployment. There is a lot of work to do.

One of the greatest successes of the Local Initiatives Program this winter, regardless of whether projects were initiated in big cities or in small hamlets, has been the willingness of so many young people to accept jobs at moderate rates of income because they felt they were achieving both their goals—first, a quantum of purchasing power as a result of their work and, second, the making of a contribution to the quality of life by the very nature of the project upon which they are engaged. This is to the everlasting credit of these young people and of people in general.

Some of the studies to which reference has been made this afternoon disclose that more than 52 per cent of the people who worked on local initiative programs this winter previously had been in receipt of unemployment insurance or welfare assistance. In other words, despite what reactionaries say—there are still a few of them around—these people could very well have remained on unemployment insurance or on welfare without going beyond the norms of social behaviour. Instead, they felt morally bound to go off the welfare rolls or the unemployment insurance rolls and become involved in projects of the type which they feel are of help to the community.

In conclusion, I shall again mention Bill C-195 which will be before the House very soon and which has

Unemployment among Youth

received unanimous support in the committee. In addition to this support we have received the benefit of ideas from the hon. member for Gander-Twillingate (Mr. Lundrigan) and spokesmen for other parties as to where the department should be directing its efforts over the next five years. Bill C-195 will remove the three-year rule for the first time since the department became engaged in occupational training. When it is passed we shall be able to provide financial assistance to youngsters who have been in the work force for only one year.

This is in line with one of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on the Status of Women; the change will benefit young ladies entering the work force or, perhaps, widows who need retraining to help them adapt to the requirements of modern-day living. The other main feature of the bill will be to provide on-the-job training for the first time as a permanent feature rather than as an ad hoc program attached to the winter employment plan with the consent of the provinces, as was the case last winter.

• (2110)

Generally, on-the-job training has been a huge success. It has provided jobs, for the most part for young people who are coming into the work force for the first time. The criteria are very stringent, demanding that these people at least be paid the minimum wage and other fringe benefits such as unemployment insurance. It was readily and happily endorsed by industry. The fact that we spent \$50 million in a short period of time indicates the ready acceptance of on-the-job training.

I believe that the thrust of Manpower in future will be toward this type of vocational, on-the-job training rather than the traditional type of training in the classroom which the Department of Manpower has been doing very effectively for the last five, six or seven years. I see Manpower in the future adopting the strategy of taking young people at the age of 16, 17 or 18 of perhaps subnormal, or abnormally low levels of education and over a three, four or five-year period giving them an accelerated high school course, a year or two of vocational training and perhaps another year of on-the-job training, hopefully as part of an industrial strategy. Then when we turn out these well rounded young people all across Canada, jobs will be available for them. At the same time, the program will maintain a degree of flexibility so that in its last year or so we may be able to redirect or reorient their final year of training so that jobs are readily available to them and they are readily available to fill the jobs.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I see that two hon. members wish to ask questions of the minister. I should indicate at this point that there have been discussions directly between a number of hon. members in an attempt to apportion the time remaining between now and ten o'clock, namely, 45 minutes. There are three members who wish to take part in the debate, the hon. member for Peterborough (Mr. Faulkner), the hon. member for St. John's West (Mr. Carter) and the hon. member for Selkirk (Mr. Rowland). If all hon. members agree, perhaps 15 minutes might be allocated to each of these three members before we call it ten o'clock. If that is done I think it