

*The Address—Mr. Dick*

programs, scholarship programs and so on, to assist in giving new skills to the people who qualify so that they can find a job in the future.

I want to go into the problem of youth unemployment in some detail, Mr. Speaker. It has been a problem in Canada for several years. There are long-term dangers that Canada's newest entrants into the labour force, still forming their initial attitudes to work, will be frustrated and turned off by bleak employment prospects are obvious. The Government's approach has been to put in place an impressive list—and I emphasize the word "list"—of band-aid and stop-gap programs. Rather than a list—which does not create jobs—we require well designed, integrated and meaningful programs put in place by a well co-ordinated administration, not a bureaucratic maze. When the Government has referred to youth unemployment in the past, it has characterized it as unusually high or temporary. Even in the last two or three years it has changed that, but still reflects on it always as something that it is wrestling with and indicates that soon it will not be the problem it is today. Sometimes it talks about and blames what it refers to as the sudden increase in participation rate.

The Government is misleading the Canadian people rather than accepting blame for its own ineptness. If the Government read its own figures it would realize that the problem has been growing steadily for the past 10 years. The present situation was predictable, but the Government ignored it until the crisis came. It pretended that the problem would solve itself in the near future.

Let us go back to the middle 1970s. In December, 1973, the unemployment rate among those aged 14 to 24 was 9.7 per cent; today it is 18.7 per cent. In December, 1974, that 9.7 per cent had gone to 10.6 per cent; by 1975 it had gone to 12.5 per cent; by 1976 it had gone to 13.4 per cent; and by 1977 it had gone to 15.2 per cent. So it has been an increasing problem all through the seventies. When the Government saw the problem increasing, why did it not have its other eye on Statistics Canada the demographic studies of which showed those people who at that stage were between five and nine years of age, between 10 and 14 or between 15 and 19? The figures showed a big bulge of young people who would be coming into the work force in five to ten years. The Government should have realized then that there would be a problem in the years ahead. The problem has existed and it is still there.

Unfortunately, since those days, when you take inflation into account, the Government has reduced the amount of money it has spent on summer programs and on youth programs in total.

After some 15 years, the Government's mismanagement of the economy has forced other people to think of other things that are needed. If this Party has the opportunity to form the Government, I hope it will take steps to stabilize the economy and provide meaningful, short-term job-creation programs. I say meaningful, short-term job-creation programs because so many of the job-creation programs that the Government institutes are meaningless. People are on the job but they do not know what they are doing. Basically, it is an excuse to get a

pay-cheque which, after 20 weeks, will put them back on unemployment insurance benefits. But there are ways of running meaningful, short-term job-creation programs, Mr. Speaker.

I agree that the short-term job-creation programs will be government sponsored and initiated. But they will differ from those of the present Government because they will be of productive use to the community at large and will create long-term benefits. I believe we can have short-term job-creation programs that will give skills to people and will assist society as a whole. I believe this can be done without causing a serious drain on our resources. At the same time we must look at the long term, and I urge the Government to do so.

I want to touch on a number of things that I have talked about over the years and throw them out as ideas which might be taken up by any party, as long as something meaningful is done. Usually a program for Winter Works or Summer Works is announced two or three months in advance, giving how much is going to be spent. I think a declaration of that nature, giving such short lead time, does not allow for the proper planning and staging of impressive works programs. I remember the five-year Winter Works program, for example, which the Diefenbaker Government introduced—not that the Diefenbaker Government was the end all and be all but it had some good ideas in those days. Perhaps a municipal capital works program could be set up whereby the Government would give certain funds to a municipality over and above those which were already existing from federal and provincial grants.

• (1630)

A municipality could apply to set up a municipally-owned capital works project within its jurisdiction, such as community centres, arenas, water treatment facilities, fresh water supply services, sewage treatment facilities and/or sewage service facilities, roads, sidewalks and so on. The Government would have to give some money for the materials as well as the labour costs over and above those already covered. However, the important thing about this would be, in my view, that government could insist, for environmental reasons, that the first project would be for, as an example, a sewage system, in order to make sure the municipality was adequately covered in that area. If the municipality was already supplied with appropriate sewage treatment facilities, then it could apply for other projects. Why not, indeed, make a stipulation that 50 per cent or 60 per cent of the jobs created must be for those who are under 25 years or 26 years of age? One would, for instance, employ three apprentice electricians and one journeyman electrician who would be teaching those apprentices the job and those young people would be given a skill. The same could be done for draughtsmen, surveyors, carpenters, pipefitters, whatever job description there may be. There would have to be a certain ratio of those learning the skill, of course, as compared to the senior craftsmen under whose auspices they would be doing the work. I would encourage some thinking along those lines, considering that this would be a type of short-term, job-creation program designed to encourage our young people