

We often say that we are living in a free enterprise society, but because of developments and rapid changes in our society, one must admit that the application of a kind of socialization, convincing above all the recipients of the pride and worthiness of work, is necessary, as far as possible, as one commonly says. These people must be interested in being helped to earn their living when they are able to do it.

With regard to "Opportunities for Age" Program, I suggest that one should rather say in French—I do not want to be accounted a purist since I am not one—one should rather say "Opportunities for Old People" or "for Old People of 65 and more", because, Mr. Speaker, as other hon. members in this House, I am in my middle years but I have not reached yet the official old age, that is of 65 or more.

As I said earlier, this motion is quite commendable. The Opportunities for Age program should be included in a more comprehensive scheme. As for its application, senior citizen organizations and persons interested should be consulted. Older people could no doubt give good advice to those who would set up and administer this program as well as their co-operation for such an organization and administration.

Would it not be better to include all those programs under a single one that could be called "Opportunities for Citizens" or "Initiatives for Citizens"? I believe the word "initiative" implies a suggestion of another kind that would enable Canadian citizens, regardless of their age or social position, to show some initiative or creativeness in order to be most useful to society.

"Opportunities" suggests "expectancy". One thinks of those poor people on welfare who spend their time waiting to get everything from other people and from the government. The government has responsibilities towards welfare recipients and older people, I agree. But if they are always asked to wait, they might develop a bad habit.

The comprehensive program I mentioned could include students, unemployed adults or welfare recipients and older people who are still efficient and alert.

However, considering the achievements of the last two years, I believe we must take care to ensure the best organization and the best administration for programs, according to well-established general and specific standards and criteria. It might be better for the government, in the case of a comprehensive program, to train a team of experienced, specialized and permanent officials, of course with the temporary co-operation of the people concerned, students, unemployed, welfare recipients and older people, concerning implementation of those programs. Because of the convictions of several—I would even say most—members of this House, and because of the misery and hardship which prevail in some areas and within certain groups, a formula that I would rather call socialization has to be applied. However, those principles must not be applied in a socialistic spirit, since we must not forget that for most of us, respect for the principles of free enterprise, of liberalism in the fullest sense of the word, is somewhat synonymous with respect for the freedom of the individual. In the main, we should implement those programs along the lines of a socialization concept

Improvement Program for Aged

which would be a lesser evil in some respects, because of the yet unadjusted effects of our technological society, of our changing society.

[English]

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Question.

Mr. Heath Macquarrie (Hillsborough): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the venerable member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) that I will not talk out this bill. In looking over the order paper this is one motion that I find interesting and worthwhile. It is, seemingly, always necessary that we sloganeer and make use of euphemisms and expressions such as "opportunities for age" and "opportunities for youth," but regardless of the nomenclature I think the idea put forth by the hon. member for Surrey-White Rock (Mr. Mather) is worthwhile and practical.

I do not know that I would go so far as to agree with those who say that what we really want is an opportunity for everyone. Of course we do; but if I have it in proper perspective, what the mover of this motion wants is some special effort made because of the special needs of people of advanced years. It seems to me that if you make everything special, you make everything general. This is what took place in large measure with reference to the designated areas program. When you designate practically the whole country, the special incentive for areas to participate becomes vitiated and weakened.

• (1740)

I agree with the hon. member for Thunder Bay (Mr. Penner) who suggested that in this age we must think young. I think the high calibre of our youth is a source of pride. The situation today is somewhat different from that which existed in earlier societies when the expression "your elders" had an impact on the rest of society which was somewhat more sacrosanct than the impact of today. You venerated those who were aged just because they were aged. Conditions have changed now and all too frequently the aged are the recipients of less attention. In earlier ages they were the recipients of great attention and veneration. We must remind ourselves, as Ulysses did long ago, that old age hath yet its honours and its toil. We must recognize that there is room for government involvement through legislation at both ends of the scale, for youth and for the aged.

In some ways life has become such more depersonalized than it was before. The family unit is less integrated and less intense than it used to be. So we find that people, as they reach a certain age, respond to something less personal and perhaps less warm than the family unit. There are many reasons for this, but I will not this afternoon enter into a long sociological dissertation.

The hon. member who introduced this notice of motion suggested that older people should be given the opportunity to fly across the ocean to their former homelands. That, I think, is an excellent idea. I think, also, we should act on the ideas of the hon. member for Thunder Bay, perhaps under the CESO program. Some of the young people in the CUSO program used to call the CESO group the paunch corps. They were referring to people of advanced years, as they were seen to be by those 19, 20 or 21.