

In his statement the minister was limited to saying: "Unfortunately many worth-while projects will be rejected. But it was never intended that this program should be a total answer to summer employment for students." That understatement is the masterpiece of the minister's career because it acknowledges the almost total failure of this government to realize what its basic responsibilities are with regard to youth and their importance to this country.

It is near the end of March and we are talking about a progress report on this year's Opportunities for Youth program. We were told last fall we would have a thoroughgoing evaluation of last summer's activities which would give us some clear idea as to the strategy and goals for this year's program. Where is that report? We got a gloss of it in December. We were again told in December that we would have the report shortly. We have been left to read in the usual fashion what the government is up to, through leaked reports in the daily press which tell us that the goals of meeting the youth unemployment crisis are being failed by this government.

There is a complete lack of recognition and co-ordination. Only yesterday afternoon I sought the unanimous consent of the House to move a motion in these terms:

That the Secretary of State immediately consult with business and industry in order to develop a concerted approach to the imminent crisis in youth unemployment.

Unfortunately, some hon. members saw fit not to consent.

We have heard that somewhere in the minister's vast department some industrial referral centre is trying to deal with the five out of six projects that will not be accepted under the Opportunities for Youth; yet we have heard no specific mention or acknowledgement of this program. Basically, we are getting non-answers from an overworked minister with regard to the youth unemployment crisis. It seems to me at least that this minister is just not capable any longer of handling this tremendously important problem. It is time the government acknowledged that it has a basic responsibility to co-ordinate not only its own activities, but to suggest and allow for co-ordination of activities in other levels of government and in the private sector.

In the statement today we were not even told about the subjective parts of the selection process. Will there be any kind of negotiation as there was last year with regard to project submissions? What will be the criteria in subjective selection of projects? Will the final answer be that five out of six project groups will receive a form letter, as was the case last year, with reasons that are not clear as to why their project is not acceptable? That kind of answer is unacceptable to the members of this House and the people of this country.

Mr. Doug Rowland (Selkirk): Mr. Speaker, all of us on this side of the House are getting tired of the government periodically and triumphantly trotting out temporary measures to deal with our now chronic problem of massive unemployment in this country. Opportunities for Youth, while it contains the germ of a good idea, that of providing young people with opportunities to conceive, plan and execute projects which they believe are interesting, challenging and socially worth while, is in the end

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simply another patch like the Local Initiatives Program on a system based on a dying, decaying economic philosophy.

These programs do not go even a small part of the way toward meeting the real needs of this country and its people, young or old. This country needs a government dedicated to the creation of full employment. Only full employment will provide real opportunities for youth, real opportunities for young adults, real opportunities for the middle-aged, real opportunities for the elderly, and avoid programs which are essentially government subsidies to an already, for the most part, privileged group. Opportunities for Youth is essentially a middle-class program for middle-class youth, an attempt to buy off an extremely able, highly articulate segment of our society who know, when discontented, how to apply pressure so it hurts.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Rowland: It is this group that the government is attempting to buy off with Opportunities for Youth; it is attempting to buy them off and divert their attention from correcting the real social ills to which they would otherwise be devoting their attention.

I am fed up to the back teeth with middle-class programs for middle-class kids when there are no corresponding programs for the other 85 per cent of the population. Leaving aside other age groups, what does this program do for the 75 per cent of the young people who are not in universities or community colleges?

Where did the minister say his 75 field workers spent their time? Was it among the 70 per cent of the young people who might have some difficulty in setting down their ideas for worth-while projects in a manner which would impress someone sitting behind a desk in Ottawa evaluating those submissions? No. The minister told us with evident pride that the field workers spent their time "meeting young people at high schools, on college and university campuses and conferring with municipal officials and representatives of various public organizations".

I ask hon. members, are these the people who need assistance in making preparations? They are already where they are because they have demonstrated some facility in communication. When is this government going to do something really meaningful to assist the disadvantaged in this country? I have given up hope.

The ultimate perversion is that some former employees of the Opportunities for Youth program of last year set themselves up in business writing submissions for people who wish to apply this year. As one former employee of Opportunities for Youth said:

We are producing a generation of professional grants-men, kids from universities with long training in how to deal with this era of public grant giving.

I have nothing at all against doing something for college and university students—far from it—but not to the exclusion of everyone else and not with a program which does not even meet the needs of that group of society. Last year I was willing to put up with mistakes in the conception and execution of Opportunities for Youth because it was a new program, all too rapidly thrown together. This year I am not, not after a year's experience and certainly not