

motions that will be debated in the remaining part of the session.

If I recall correctly from my limited knowledge of history when Alexander the Great was causing great devastation militarily a number of centuries ago, he spared one city because the city fathers indicated to him through an envoy that they were prepared to give him anything in the city with the exception of their young people. Alexander the Great replied that anyone with that kind of attitude, anyone who had that kind of foresight, did not deserve to suffer a military attack. That was the reaction of Alexander the Great.

Today we have "Pierre the Great", the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau), who has quite a different attitude. If I can quote the Prime Minister, who was speaking in London, Ontario on November 11, 1971, he said:

Isn't it true that perhaps more and more people are turning away from the work ethic . . . And some of them are unemployed, but their life is more meaningful being unemployed—that's their judgment—than somebody else who works a 40-hour week and produces something which in their judgment is of no use to society and perhaps may even be of negative use—

The Prime Minister is claiming that our young people are turning away from the work ethic, that in fact they rather enjoy being unemployed, that they do not aspire to be creatively employed but are enjoying life just lying around in various parts of the country. As someone has just indicated to me, Pierre the Great should heed the lesson of Alexander the Great. I think the Prime Minister was correct when he said that young people today and people generally would question whether in fact work should be defined as only the creation or production of material wealth. I agree with him in that, but think he is very much out of touch if he still thinks young people in Canada today are satisfied to be on the unemployment roll and wandering across this country in search of jobs. That is certainly not the attitude of the young people I have talked to in the last several months. As a person who has been actively involved with a number of young people across Canada, and as a Member of Parliament talking to those who visit here, I have been very impressed with the attitude of young people as far as future employment is concerned. I suggest that today the greatest significant effort of our young people is the endeavour to find employment. They are as concerned as any age group about becoming productively employed.

• (1520)

One of my colleagues to my left has indicated the statistical problem in some detail. In the last several months I have been accused of emphasizing the statistics of unemployment to a greater extent than I perhaps should, so I will leave that matter as it now is on the record. The hon. member indicated the number of young people in the age group from 14 to 24 who are looking for work, and has also indicated the national average in respect of employment of those under age 24. He has referred to the 30,000 jobs created under the Opportunities for Youth Program, and emphasized the fact that we have spent some \$30 million. He indicated that approximately two million Canadians, and the figure 1.8 million is quoted frequently, between the ages of 14 and 25 years are looking for employment.

Unemployment among Youth

What concerns me much more than these statistics and the impact of our economy on these young people, is the fact that from the first day they enter school, that is from kindergarten through the entire educational system, they are urged by their parents, their teachers, their community leaders and their governments to strive to reach that great plateau when they have gained an education and can enter constructive fields. However, there are tens of thousands of young people in this country who have gained university degrees, graduation from technical trade schools and various colleges and high schools, who find themselves frustrated in an unfriendly economy in which they cannot find employment. I think these unemployed young people represent the most serious component of the problem we are discussing today.

I am not going to become involved in a long discussion of this problem, but I could spend a great deal of the next few minutes talking about the magnitude of it and quoting examples of the devastating effect unemployment has on these people. I could quote examples of representations we have received in recent weeks from urban groups, especially those in Toronto, but perhaps I should move on to a discussion of the responsibilities and where they lie, with some elaboration of the suggestion made by my colleague.

We must take first matters first. The fact of the matter is that the problem of unemployment among young people can never be considered totally a government problem. The government should recognize this fact. Regardless of what type of program it adopts, including the Opportunities for Youth program, there is no way this problem can be resolved by purely narrow government involvement. The government must acknowledge the fact that we have to consider the total economy. It must recognize that unless we get industry more actively involved in an effort to create employment for young people we will continue for the next several years with a very heavy degree of unemployment among young people.

In its haste to create a favourable political climate by bragging about the Opportunities for Youth Program, the government has failed to recognize the problem, and has overlooked the importance of getting the economy moving. The government should make more effort to get industry involved. It should provide some kind of incentive to industry to show how worthwhile it is to employ young people. I firmly believe the federal government has never really paid enough attention to the federal-provincial-municipal aspect of this situation. The federal government announced the Opportunities for Youth Program without any consultation whatsoever with the provinces. The province of Ontario, the province of Alberta and other provinces have brought in their own programs and if I can judge by comments made publicly, there was never any great effort to integrate these policies and programs.

I would hasten to add that the federal government is not totally to blame. Certainly, all three levels of government must be brought into play if we are to have a significant impact. The first thing that must be said is that the Opportunities for Youth and the Local Initiatives Programs must undergo very serious re-evaluation. We are talking about 30,000 jobs and about literally hundreds of groups