

Unemployment among Youth

of the problems of the particular group of Canadians mentioned in the notice of motion, the young people of Canada. I repeat that over the past ten years we have increased the number of young employees by 57.8 per cent, compared to 33.4 per cent in the growth of employment in all other age groups.

When we get into the question of Manpower programs, in their scope they embrace the whole work force from age 14 on, in some cases past age 65. These Manpower programs have been quite properly tilted in favour of young people. Although the young people form 24 per cent of the labour force, under the occupational training program no less than 40 per cent of the courses are placed at the disposal of this 24 per cent of the labour force. This indicates, once again, that we are quite logically devoting a disproportionate number of courses under the Manpower occupational training program to the young people of Canada.

With regard to Canada Manpower mobility programs, the young man who introduced the motion claimed that we have not done anything at all about youngsters with legitimate aspirations, or have not in any way taken into consideration their particular problem. We find that the young workers under age 24 have taken advantage of this mobility program, and that 35 per cent of all Canadians relocated through the mobility program in 1970-71 were youngsters under age 25, again well above the 24 per cent of the work force which they represent. I could give a lot of statistics. Each and every case indicates that a disproportionate amount of money, number of places and emphasis has been placed on the youngsters coming into the work force for the first time.

Opportunities for Youth is not the type of program that I consider to be particularly geared to alleviate unemployment. I think its main purpose is to provide a quality of life and some diversion for our youngsters in high school and university. It provides them with an opportunity to travel, to see this country, even to virtually loaf, if one wants to use that expression, and at the same time contribute usefully to society. It has been a very imaginative program but its main thrust is not solely to create jobs. The winter employment program introduced by my predecessor early last winter was definitely instituted for the specific role of alleviating unemployment. It was highly successful and provided 100,000 to 150,000 jobs and training opportunities. This is a considerable number of jobs and placements.

In addition to the Local Initiatives Program and the programs inspired by the municipalities with their funds, we embarked for the first time on an experiment called on-the-job training—at least for the first time in this country. We allocated \$30 million to this program and quite rapidly raised that amount to \$50 million. Of those who participated in the program known as on-the-job training, 64 per cent were youngsters under the age of 25. What is even more surprising is that of the \$180 million which went to the Local Initiatives Program, or LIP as it is commonly called in this place, 40 per cent went to participants under the age of 25.

If hon. members have the chance tomorrow to review *Hansard* and these statistics they will see that practically every project or program that the government has devised

in recent years to offset unemployment, as well as the permanent programs which flow under the Department of Manpower, have all been geared to take into consideration the special characteristics of Canada's work force, namely, the heavy participation in that work force by youngsters under the age of 25. We are very heavily committed to the future along these lines. For the most part, Manpower programs are devised in conjunction with the provinces. We have certain commitments to carry them on from year to year, after consultation with the provinces, according to formulas that are built into the act. So it is safe and logical to say that over the next few years, as the economy improves the emphasis in my department will continue to be directed to the young people of this country.

• (2100)

Reference has been made several times today to the study which was carried out in 1969 to discuss the aspirations of young people. This report, which was entitled, I believe, "It's Your Turn" was submitted in 1971. It was based on extensive interviews with youth across this country, ascertaining their demands and desires and taking account of their suggestions. It is now receiving detailed study in order that our future programs may be based on the desires and suggestions of this important segment of Canadian society.

In Ontario, as other speakers have already mentioned, a similar task force has been carrying out a study on employment opportunities for welfare recipients. We in the federal Department of Manpower were pleased to assist in the preparation of this report by supplying at least two of our senior officials as well as by preparing statistical and other information. This report deals extensively with young people and their problems.

I might mention the work of our special Canada Manpower centres set up to assist students seeking employment. Hon. members might be interested to hear that last summer these special centres were instrumental in finding work for 89 per cent of those who registered for employment. Every fall we survey students to inquire about their summer employment experience, their earnings and their degree of satisfaction with what they had done. Last fall, for example, we learned from students that 80 per cent were satisfied with their summer employment and that 70 per cent felt the work was valuable in relation to their future studies and aspirations. I believe a report based on this survey is now available.

Although our activities among young people have been heavily oriented toward students, they are not limited to students. The department is engaged in a number of pilot projects related to the special problems encountered by young people seeking satisfying employment opportunities, and each year hundreds of thousands of young people come into contact with the counsellors in our Manpower centres across the country. Last year, for example, our counsellors interviewed some 300,000 young people and discussed with them matters of common concern.

I believe I have quoted enough statistics to rebut the insinuations of the sponsor of this motion and to refute the suggestion that we have been callous, that we have disregarded the problems of the young people. However,

[Mr. Mackasey.]