

of council from the volunteers would compound the difficulties of the company. The warning was there.

What happened? The government really paid no attention to Mr. Shaw's criticisms. Having established the Company of Young Canadians, as I say in a political way in order to get political advantage from the idea, the government as I pointed out put Mr. Phillips, Mr. Lalonde and Mr. Reid, who resigned somewhat earlier, and the other two on the board. I presume correctly that they were to hold a watching brief and to report to the Prime Minister who was then responsible to the cabinet. If they did not report, then certainly they were derelict in their duty. But I know these gentlemen and know they are competent, so I suggest they did report to the government. I say that if the company has made mistakes and has been to a large extent ineffective, the government is responsible more than anybody else because the government could have and should have taken steps to change the situation.

As I mentioned at the beginning members of this party supported the principle of establishing the Company of Young Canadians. We still support the original principle. There has been a good deal of criticism. We heard it from the President of the Executive Council of the city of Montreal, Mr. Saulnier, who complained particularly, among other things, about the fact that the company was helping organized groups in some of the urban renewal districts in Montreal fight the administration. Of course he did not like that. I believe this was a worthwhile objective. I said this before the committee and I say it again here. I repeat that this is something which should be done in every city, including a city like Toronto which also has urban renewal projects and has people who feel they need somebody to speak for them and help organize them. Even though the city of Toronto has a mayor who is a member of the New Democratic party, I think this is something that is needed in that city and I will fight for it.

Certainly, I say we need to blame the government. All the charges which we heard in the evidence before the committee were old hat. There was really nothing new except the charge of Mr. Saulnier that in the city of Montreal some of the volunteers were carrying on activities which, if not subversive, were pretty close to it. The remainder of the complaints were criticisms such as Mr. Shaw made and which others have made publicly almost from the beginning. The government should have acted.

Company of Young Canadians Act

As I say, we support the principles on which the company was established. We support the idea of an agency with volunteers independent of Parliament and independent of government which can do worthwhile work both in servicing and helping establish agencies for social action or, as they call it in Quebec social animation, in order to help people enunciate and express their difficulties to government and other agencies. I am all for that, Mr. Speaker.

What I object to about the Company is the type of thing which arose, which Mr. Phillips, Mr. Lalonde and Mr. Reid could have stopped had they supported members of the provisional board such as Mr. Shaw. The principle evolved over the years. It was not just that the company was independent of government policy and the minister but that the volunteers by themselves were independent of the board and the director. The volunteers did not have to account to anyone. I do not have time to go into the detail, but the minister knows about the resignations which took place over this past weekend from the board because two volunteers involved in two projects in Toronto did not feel the board had a right to arrange for their projects to be evaluated, even though the evaluator himself was a volunteer.

● (4:50 p.m.)

I say that under those circumstances, in view of that kind of Alice in Wonderland organization, it is not surprising that there had been criticism of the company and of the fact that the company has had a new director virtually every year. In fact, I am surprised that the company has functioned as well as it has. I want to state for the record that in my opinion, while there is a good deal wrong with the company, it has done a number of effective jobs. I will mention just a few of them. I am sure that other members can speak about their own areas. In Montreal there was the ACEF project which still exists today. A large number of volunteers have worked there with low income families on problems of budgeting and financing for the last couple of years. This project was initiated by former associates of the minister in the CNTU in Montreal, and it has been a very worthwhile one.

In Calgary, there was the NOW project which began by one volunteer organizing citizens in a redeveloped area. This resulted in a city wide organization concerned in welfare, education and housing for poor people. It is the kind of project which I would like to see duplicated in virtually every big city in Canada.