

HOUSE OF COMMONS

Friday, May 14, 1971

The House met at 11 a.m.

ROUTINE PROCEEDINGS

[Translation]

TRANSPORT AND COMMUNICATIONS

Third report of Standing Committee on Transport and Communications, in the two official languages—Mr. Lesard (LaSalle).

[Editor's Note: For text of above report, see today's Votes and Proceedings.]

[English]

ORAL QUESTION PERIOD

LABOUR CONDITIONS

UNEMPLOYMENT AMONG YOUTH—INQUIRY AS TO NEW PROGRAMS TO MEET PROBLEM

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): I should like to ask the Prime Minister a question based on the Dominion Bureau of Statistics figures on unemployment among young Canadians, which is now at the rate of 13.6 per cent actual and 12.3 per cent seasonally adjusted. In view of these figures, and bearing in mind the fact they are relevant for a period before the exodus of students seeking summer employment, is it the intention of the government to announce any new programs designed to meet the problem of summer unemployment particularly and unemployment among young Canadians generally?

Right Hon. P. E. Trudeau (Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker, that is not our present intention. We never preclude the possibility of the government announcing new programs if and when they appear desirable, but we have no present intention of doing that. I might remind the Leader of the Opposition that some weeks ago we announced we were spending \$57 million to meet this problem, which was considerably more than the few millions we had allocated last year, which was more than the zero of previous times. As the hon. member knows, the Secretary of State announced \$10 million additional to the \$57 million, bringing the total to \$67 million for the summer months. We feel that this is a considerable improvement over all past programs.

Mr. Stanfield: I should like to ask the right hon. gentleman whether the figures that were released yesterday do not in fact indicate a much more serious condition than the government had anticipated, based upon all previous

forecasts made by the Minister of Finance, and whether this does not create a new context in which the government ought to consider the problem of summer employment and employment for young Canadians generally?

Mr. Trudeau: It does, Mr. Speaker, and as the Minister of Finance said yesterday we are concerned about the new figures released yesterday. We shall be looking very closely to see whether they indicate a change in the favourable trend that has been established since last September. But I must guard the opposition, who supported not only the \$10 million that the Secretary of State announced a few days ago but indeed said the amount should be more, against the danger of concentrating only on the young and failing to realize that there are a lot of heads of families in Canada who must also be thought of. Therefore, with the naturally not unlimited resources of the country we must not only think of spending money on the young people, as the opposition seem concerned to do.

Mr. Stanfield: We will have the figures for longer term employment within a few days and the government has to accept responsibility for them as well as those for our youth. I should like to ask the Prime Minister whether he would not reconsider the imposition of an additional portfolio on the Secretary of State, who is responsible for implementing the program of summer employment for students? Would he not relieve the minister of that responsibility in view of these alarming figures, or does the Prime Minister believe that the additional responsibilities imposed on the minister will not interfere with the implementation of this program any more than the writing of a book by the minister interfered with the development of the program originally?

Mr. Trudeau: I will certainly consider that, Mr. Speaker, but I wish that the opposition would consider passing the government organization bill which would permit us to name additional ministers.

Mr. Woolliams: That would not help.

Mr. Trudeau: Mr. Speaker, I do not easily see how the opposition can argue, on the one hand, that the government is trying to establish too many ministries, talk about a pork barrel and try to defeat the organization bill and, on the other hand, suggest we should establish today a new ministry for youth, the other day a new ministry for women, and the day before a new ministry—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Baldwin: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, as usual the Prime Minister misrepresents the position. He