

*Company of Young Canadians Act*

is necessary for all of us who are middle-aged or over to realize that young people are not looking at a perfect world. We cannot pat ourselves on the back and say we have created the best society in Canada, or in the world, and the youngsters must accept it. There is a great deal wrong with our society and there is a great deal that is disturbing about the world. The young people of Canada and of other countries are complaining about the evils of society and demanding that they be corrected. Surely this is a matter for congratulation rather than condemnation.

I am not talking about those young people or older people—and they are in every age group—who are extremists and go beyond what is considered an appropriate line. The line differs. For some people opposite the line will be in one place, the line for members of the official opposition will be in another place, and the line as far as I am concerned will be pretty far out. If we are to change the fundamental structure of society in order to get rid of its evils that exist, it will not be done by people who sit back complacently and never get angry about the situation.

• (4:30 p.m.)

It is a good thing to be angry about evil, to express indignation about human suffering and to bang the table about it. Those who do that are not to be condemned. That is the purpose of the Company of Young Canadians. If it is to perform that function, there must be independence for the company from the government and from other agencies. I emphasize that I am saying independence for the company. I am not saying there should be independence for every volunteer to do as he likes. I am saying that the company should be set up properly, and that the council and executive director should be given sufficient room in which to perform their work without being controlled by government, bureaucratic organizations or anything of that sort. Therefore, the company itself must be independent.

I have listened to a great deal of criticism of the Company of Young Canadians. I could make a great deal of criticism, because all of us know about the projects which were irresponsible and the action of some volunteers which undoubtedly was irresponsible. But who in heaven's name is responsible for that situation? The minister and others on the government side have said the act as it now stands gives no power. I say, blow that. I do not accept that, because for three years until October of this year there was a provisional council, every member of which was appointed

by the government. There were three or four executive directors, each one of whom was appointed by the government.

As a lawyer, let me remind this assembly that every time a volunteer was hired, a contract was signed with him or should have been. When you sign a contract, you have a right in law to put into the contract anything to which the two parties agree. If the provisional council and the executive directors had had any imagination and capacity, they could have avoided all the difficulties that have occurred—because they did not occur over a period of two or three months, but over a period of one or two years.

I say with all kindness to the minister that he was wrong when he said he had no power. He did not have power as a minister, but the council did, and if the right people had been appointed and given guidelines they could have laid down conditions which the volunteers would have had to observe. It is that which is responsible for the mess in which the Company of Young Canadians became involved.

People complain about the kind of persons who became volunteers. Let me say two things about that. Even those of whose acts I disapprove, I admire for having offered their services. The reason you sometimes get certain kinds of people in this type of work instead of others is that too many of our young people just like too many of our older people, have been absorbed by the system of values in our society and are more anxious to go out and make money than to give their services to this kind of organization for very little money.

Those people who gave their services obviously were dedicated to the purposes for which the Company of Young Canadians was founded. From among them it could have been possible for the council and executive directors to choose people who had the least hang-ups instead of those who had the most. It was within their power to look at the applications, make some inquiries about these people and sift them, instead of appointing, as is my impression, almost everyone who came and offered himself or herself for the job.

Of course, there were people who abused their position and took advantage of it. That is not the fault of the people who abused it in the first instance; it is the fault of the government and the type of council and executive directors who appointed these people because they were either unwilling or unable to judge