

participants in the Opportunities for Youth program and the general public for discussion and comment.

These steps are, of course, in addition to the careful examinations of projects made by my officials based on criteria agreed to by Treasury Board and explained on Wednesday by the Minister without Portfolio responsible for citizenship (Mr. Stanbury) and on other occasions by myself and other members of the government. They should provide the basis upon which this House can place its faith in the responsibility of our young people and, at the same time, feel confident that it is carrying out its responsibilities for the spending of public funds.

When we designed the Opportunities for Youth program, we knew it was experimental. We knew there would be problems of implementation. But we had confidence in the responsibility and good sense of young people. We still have that confidence and I certainly have seen nothing in the criticism that has emerged to date to shake that confidence. I have seen innuendo. I have seen unspecific and unsubstantiated sweeping attacks.

The attacks that have come are absolutely true to the tradition we have come to expect from critics of the young. They jump on isolated incidents and use them to pillory a whole generation. They scream about youth problems and disregard the overwhelming positive and constructive activity that the young embrace so enthusiastically, time and time again. They demand that we institutionalize and bureaucratize programs involving the young to the point where all possibility of error is eliminated.

Mr. Baldwin: I rise on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. Your Honour is aware, of course, of the terms of the Standing Order which provides that statements made on motions must be limited to facts.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Baldwin: The minister should have been here last Wednesday when he was invited. He would have had a chance to make his speech. Under the Standing Order the minister has no right to depart from facts. He is not entitled to give opinions, and I would ask Your Honour to reprimand him.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

• (11:20 a.m.)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I might say that if I reprimanded hon. members every time they express opinions when a statement is made by a minister on motions and comments are made by hon. members on behalf of the opposition parties, I would be doing much more reprimanding than the Chair wants to do. In any event, the minister is as well aware as the hon. member for Peace River and all other hon. members that the Standing Order provides that statements are to be factual and not controversial. I suggest that this should apply both to ministers and to those who make comments on behalf of opposition parties.

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Mr. Pelletier: I just have a few lines to go at any rate, Mr. Speaker.

I was saying that they want to impose on our program so many restrictions that there would be no freedom left, no room for young people to innovate, to initiate, to exercise responsibility. What it all boils down to is that they just do not trust young people.

Some hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I assume that the statement is now concluded. The hon. member for Gander-Twillingate rises on a question of privilege.

Mr. Lundrigan: On a question of privilege, Mr. Speaker, I think the Secretary of State should be requested by the Chair to withdraw the remarks he has just made which are a terrible reflection on members of the House on both sides and should not be permitted to go unchallenged by the House.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. The hon. member for Egmont.

Mr. David MacDonald (Egmont): Mr. Speaker, I do not entirely blame the minister for wanting to divert attention from many of the fundamental problems that exist within the Opportunities for Youth program. I suppose it is only natural that in his desire to avoid and deflect the obvious criticism from many sources he should try to mislead this House and the public badly. There has been evidence of that this morning.

There had been some hope that the minister, after so many weeks and months of engaging in this process, might have something worth while to contribute this morning. Indeed, it was announced well in advance that he would make a statement in the House today on the Opportunities for Youth program. He did not even have the courtesy to send a copy of his statement to the opposition parties before the sitting began. One would have thought that, rather than only a few words to those who submitted the close to 11,000 projects which have been rejected, he would have had more to say than:

But I also know that the vast majority have shown real understanding and appreciation of what is involved in implementing this program.

I am sure they know only too well, now that they have received the thousands of form letters which say next to nothing as to the reasons for which their programs have been rejected.

I think it is absolutely shocking that the minister should have the effrontery to come before the House today without being prepared to answer some of the specific questions which have been asked time and time again in this place. On Wednesday I reminded both the parliamentary secretary and the minister without portfolio in charge of winking that the minister had confirmed to me many weeks ago that there would be an active process of negotiation with regard to rejected projects with other authorities, whether they be municipal,