



PRIME MINISTER

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERY

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

SPEECH BY THE PRIME MINISTER
YOUTH AFFAIRS ASSEMBLY
MELBOURNE - 7 FEBRUARY 1986

THIS YOUTH AFFAIRS ASSEMBLY, AND THE GOVERNMENT WHICH I LEAD, HAVE BEFORE US ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT AND COMPLEX TASKS FACING ANY NATION TODAY. AND THAT IS THE CREATION OF A WORTHWHILE FUTURE FOR OUR YOUNG PEOPLE. IT IS A DAUNTING AND A DIFFICULT TASK. BUT IT IS ALSO A TASK ON WHICH, I AM GLAD TO SAY, WE HAVE ALREADY MADE A SOLID START.

THIS IS THE SECOND TIME I HAVE ATTENDED A YACA MEETING. THE FIRST TIME I DID SO, IN DECEMBER 1982, I WAS SHADOW MINISTER FOR YOUTH AFFAIRS. IT IS CERTAINLY A MUCH MORE REWARDING FEELING TO BE ADDRESSING YOU THIS TIME AS PRIME MINISTER OF A REJUVENATED NATION ALREADY WITH A BLUE PRINT BEFORE US FOR TACKLING THE MYRIAD PROBLEMS OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.

IT IS ALSO GRATIFYING THAT I CAN SPEAK TO YOU AT A TIME WHEN PROSPECTS FOR THE FUTURE OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ARE SO SIGNIFICANTLY IMPROVED ON THOSE WHICH APPLIED AT THE END OF 1982. THAT PERIOD MARKED THE DEPTHS OF THE WORST RECESSION SINCE THE 1930S. IT WAS CHARACTERISED BY A PARTICULARLY BLEAK OUTLOOK FOR THE YOUTH OF AUSTRALIA.

IT'S APPROPRIATE THAT THE YOUTH AFFAIRS COUNCIL SHOULD BE CONDUCTING THIS ASSEMBLY NOW, AT THIS IMPORTANT STAGE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR STRATEGY FOR DEALING WITH THESE PROBLEMS.

I CONGRATULATE YACA ON ITS INITIATIVE. IN THE SIX AND A HALF YEARS SINCE YACA TOOK ITS PRESENT FORM, IT HAS PROVEN TO BE AN EFFECTIVE VEHICLE FOR REPRESENTING THE VIEWS OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND THOSE CONCERNED WITH YOUTH AFFAIRS, AND FOR CARRYING THEIR VIEWS TO GOVERNMENT.

I HAVE BEEN IMPRESSED BY THE QUALITY OF YACA'S WORK OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS AND WITH THE COMMITMENT OF THE PEOPLE INVOLVED IN YOUR ACTIVITIES.

I SAID A MOMENT AGO THAT IT IS ESPECIALLY REWARDING TO SPEAK TO YOU NOW, AT A TIME WHEN THE OUTLOOK FOR YOUNG PEOPLE HAS IMPROVED MARKEDLY.

THAT IMPROVEMENT PARTLY REFLECTS THE GENERAL IMPROVEMENT IN THE AUSTRALIAN ECONOMY OVER THE LAST FEW YEARS, AND IS PARTLY BECAUSE OF OUR PRIORITY ONE STRATEGY.

PRIORITY ONE REPRESENTS THE FIRST ATTEMPT BY AN AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT TO ADDRESS THE MANY ISSUES FACING THE YOUTH OF THIS COUNTRY IN A CO-ORDINATED AND COMPREHENSIVE MANNER. WE WANT YOU AND ALL YOUNG AUSTRALIANS TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE REVIEW AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE STRATEGY.

PRIORITY ONE COMPLEMENTS OUR GENERAL ECONOMIC POLICIES WHICH HAVE PRODUCED RECORD GROWTH IN EMPLOYMENT. IN CONTRAST YOU HAVE THE INTELLECTUAL BARRENNESS OF THE OPPOSITION'S APPROACH, BASED LARGELY ON SIMPLY CUTTING YOUNG PEOPLE'S WAGES. IN THE TWO-YEARS UP TO MAY 1983, YOUTH EMPLOYMENT FELL BY 143,000. RIGHT NOW, THOUGH, WE SEE STRONG GROWTH IN EMPLOYMENT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE ENTIRE LABOUR MARKET. SINCE WE CAME TO OFFICE MORE THAN 540,000 NEW JOBS HAVE BEEN CREATED WITH OVER 100,000 OF THESE BEING TAKEN UP BY YOUNG PEOPLE. IN CONTRAST TO 1982, YOUNG AUSTRALIANS NOW HAVE A FUTURE WITH HOPE AND CONFIDENCE.

OUR PRIORITY ONE PROGRAM IS THE OUTCOME OF THREE YEARS OF CONCENTRATED WORK BY THE GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE INVOLVED IN YOUTH AFFAIRS. YACA, IN PARTICULAR, HAS PLAYED AN INVALUABLE ROLE IN FACILITATING CONSULTATION BETWEEN YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE GOVERNMENT. THE INFORMATION THAT WE HAVE GAINED FROM YACA, TOGETHER WITH STUDIES AND INQUIRIES SUCH AS THOSE BY THE OECD EXPERT TEAM, ANOP AND THE KIRBY COMMITTEE, PROVIDED THE BASIS FOR THE PRIORITY ONE STRATEGY.

I OUTLINED ITS MAJOR COMPONENTS IN MY ADDRESS TO THE NATION ON 18 AUGUST LAST YEAR.

THE SIZE OF THE TASK WHICH WE HAVE BEFORE US IN MEETING THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE CAN BE SEEN BY THE RANGE OF ISSUES ADDRESSED IN PRIORITY ONE. WHILE THE THREE CENTRAL ELEMENTS OF THE STRATEGY ARE CONCERNED WITH EDUCATION AND TRAINING, EMPLOYMENT AND INCOME SUPPORT, OTHER INITIATIVES ARE JUST AS IMPORTANT. THESE INCLUDE IMPROVING THE CO-ORDINATION AND

PROVISION OF YOUTH SERVICES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL; A SIGNIFICANT IMPROVEMENT TO THE CYSS; BETTER AND MORE PUBLIC HOUSING FOR YOUNG PEOPLE; A VOLUNTEER COMMUNITY SERVICE SCHEME; AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SPECIALISED YOUTH CENTRES WITHIN CES OFFICES.

THROUGH THE YOUTH SERVICES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM, WE WILL BE FUNDING A NUMBER OF PILOT PROJECTS, INCLUDING INFORMATION AND REFERRAL SERVICES IN AREAS WHERE YOUNG PEOPLE TEND TO GATHER, SUCH AS MAJOR SHOPPING CENTRES. WE ARE ALSO LOOKING AT WAYS TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN ISOLATED AREAS.

THE IYY CEP DEVELOPMENT PROJECT HAS FOCUSED ON SPECIFIC GROUPS OF YOUNG AUSTRALIANS, IN PARTICULAR THOSE IN ISOLATED AREAS, AS WELL AS YOUNG WOMEN, YOUNG ABORIGINALS, YOUNG PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AND YOUNG ETHNIC PEOPLE. THIS PROJECT HAS SHOWN JUST WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE CAN DO WHEN GIVEN THE CHANCE. WHILE THE PROJECT ENDS NEXT MONTH, THE NETWORKS IT ESTABLISHED WILL FLOURISH, AND MANY OF THE PARTICIPANTS WILL CONTINUE TO WORK WITH THE SPONSORING ORGANISATIONS.

THE IMPORTANCE THE GOVERNMENT PLACES ON YOUNG PEOPLE IS DOMONSTRATED BY THE FACT THAT, AT A TIME OF CONSIDERABLE SPENDING RESTRAINT, OUR GREATEST INCREASE IN EXPENDITURE IS ON YOUTH POLICIES.

PRIORITY ONE IS OUR LONG-TERM STRATEGY FOR AUSTRALIA'S YOUTH, WITH ITS FULL IMPACT TO BE FELT IN TWO TO THREE YEARS, WHEN THE MAJOR CHANGES TO THE EXISTING EDUCATION, TRAINING AND INCOME SUPPORT SYSTEMS TAKE FULL EFFECT.

PRIORITY ONE IS NOT AN OVERNIGHT, ONE DAY WONDER SCHEME. IT IS A CO-ORDINATED AND INTEGRATED PROGRAM TO TACKLE THE MANY PROBLEMS WHICH YOUNG PEOPLE FACE, IN WAYS THAT ARE RELEVANT TO THEM AND WHICH GIVE ALL YOUNG AUSTRALIANS A CHANCE TO INFLUENCE ITS IMPLEMENTATION.

IT IS ABOUT ENABLING YOUNG PEOPLE TO BE BETTER EQUIPPED SO THAT THEIR SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES ARE BETTER TAILORED TO MEET THE DEMANDS OF A RAPIDLY CHANGING WORLD. IN THE RESULT, NOT ONLY WILL YOUNG PEOPLE BENEFIT, BUT ALL OF AUSTRALIA WILL BENEFIT FROM A MORE CAPABLE AND SKILFUL POPULATION.

PRIORITY ONE WAS NEVER A PROGRAM WHICH COULD BE IMPLEMENTED AT THE FLICK OF OUR FINGERS OR WITHOUT THE TEETHING PROBLEMS WHICH ACCOMPANY ALL NEW GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES, PARTICULARLY THOSE AS COMPLEX AS THIS VITAL SCHEME.

AN EXAMPLE OF THIS IS THE AUSTRALIAN TRAINEESHIP SCHEME, A KEY ELEMENT OF PRIORITY ONE AND ONE WHICH HAS RIGHTLY RECEIVED MUCH ATTENTION. TRAINEESHIPS ARE A BOLD, AND RADICAL PROGRAM PROVIDING A NEW OPTION FOR THOSE FACING THE TRANSITION FROM SCHOOL TO WORK.

RECENTLY, THE KNOCKERS AND THE DOUBTERS HAVE EMERGED TO TRY TO UNDERMINE THIS IMPORTANT SCHEME THAT OFFERS REAL HOPE TO MANY THOUSANDS OF YOUNG AUSTRALIANS.

SO, IN ANSWER TO THEM LET ME MAKE IT CLEAR THE AUSTRALIAN TRAINEESHIP SCHEME IS GOING AHEAD AND IT IS DOING SO WITH THE SUPPORT AND COOPERATION OF MAJOR SECTIONS OF THE TRADE UNION MOVEMENT AND THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTORS.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE GOVERNMENT ACCEPTS THAT IT MAY HAVE SET AN OVER-AMBITIOUS TARGET FOR ITSELF IN AIMING TO CREATE 10,000 TRAINEESHIPS BY JULY OF THIS YEAR.

HOWEVER, WE REMAIN OPTIMISTIC THAT BOTH THIS TARGET AND THE LONG TERM GOAL OF 75,000 TRAINEESHIPS BY 1988-89 CAN BE ACHIEVED.

BUT IF WE DO FALL SHORT ON THE IMMEDIATE TARGET IT WILL NOT BE BECAUSE OF LACK OF EFFORT OR COMMITMENT. WE ARE ESTABLISHING A NEW, HIGH QUALITY SYSTEM OF VOCATIONAL TRAINING, REQUIRING FUNDAMENTAL CHANGES IN ATTITUDE TO TRAINING BY THE COMMUNITY, BY EMPLOYERS, TRADE UNIONS, GOVERNMENT AND YOUNG PEOPLE THEMSELVES. THAT CANNOT BE DONE OVERNIGHT AND WE ARE NOT GOING TO SELL YOUNG AUSTRALIANS SHORT IN A SCRAMBLE TO ARTIFICIALLY MEET OUR TARGETS.

TRAINEESHIPS REMAIN A VITAL INITIATIVE. OUR COMMITMENT TO THE SCHEME IS TOTAL.

PRIORITY ONE IS A BROAD AND A DYNAMIC PROGRAM. SO IT'S ONLY NATURAL THAT SOME FINE TUNING MAY BE REQUIRED. THIS IS WHY I MADE MY COMMITMENT TO CONSULT WITH YOUNG AUSTRALIANS ON ALL ASPECTS OF THE STRATEGY.

THIS COMMITMENT TO FIND OUT DIRECTLY YOUNG PEOPLE'S CONCERNS AND IDEAS WAS THE MOTIVATION BEHIND THE NATIONAL YOUTH PHONE-IN AND THE TALKBACK RADIO PROGRAMS WHICH I PARTICIPATED IN AT THE END OF LAST YEAR. I SPOKE PERSONALLY WITH ABOUT 120 YOUNG PEOPLE WHO CALLED IN DURING MY RADIO PROGRAMS AROUND AUSTRALIA. IN ALL, WE RECEIVED ABOUT 26,000 CALLS - THE VAST MAJORITY OF THEM WITH POSITIVE AND CONSTRUCTIVE CONTRIBUTIONS TO MAKE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF OUR POLICIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

THE PHONE-IN AND THE RADIO PROGRAMS WERE A TREMENDOUSLY WORTHWHILE EXERCISE.

IT WAS NEVER A MARKET RESEARCH EXERCISE INTENDED PURELY TO GAUGE PUBLIC OPINION; IT WAS ALWAYS INTENDED TO PROVIDE A CONDUIT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE INTO GOVERNMENT, TO COMMUNICATE THEIR INDIVIDUAL FEELINGS AND ESPECIALLY THEIR POSITIVE IDEAS ABOUT THE VARIOUS ISSUES WHICH CONCERN THEM.

YOUNG PEOPLE MAKE UP A VITAL SECTION OF THE AUSTRALIAN COMMUNITY. THEY HAVE THEIR OWN IDEAS AND PERSPECTIVES ON LIFE AND ON VARIOUS ISSUES. WE WANT THE VIEWS OF YOUNG AUSTRALIANS TO BE INCORPORATED INTO THE MAINSTREAM OF AUSTRALIAN LIFE. YOUNG PEOPLE REPRESENT OUR FUTURE. THEY SHOULD BE ALLOWED TO INFLUENCE THAT FUTURE AND THEIR OWN DESTINIES.

THAT IS WHAT WE ARE ABOUT.

THE PHONE-IN WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT A GOVERNMENT HAS UNDERTAKEN DIRECT CONSULTATION WITH A SECTOR OF THE POPULATION. IT WAS A REMARKABLE EXPERIMENT AND I WAS VERY IMPRESSED BY THE KEEN RESPONSE FROM AN EXTRAORDINARY RANGE OF YOUNG AUSTRALIANS.

AS AN OPPORTUNITY FOR DIRECT PARTICIPATION BY YOUNG AUSTRALIANS, THE PHONE-IN WAS ALSO A FITTING CULMINATION TO INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR.

ALTHOUGH I SPOKE WITH ONLY A SMALL FRACTION OF THESE WHO CALLED IN, I LEARNT MUCH FROM THEIR IDEAS.

FROM EARLY ANALYSIS OF THE PHONE-IN CALLS SOME MAJOR THEMES ARE ALREADY APPARENT. SOME SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FOR POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION ARE EMERGING. I WANT TO TALK ABOUT SOME OF THESE THEMES NOW, ALTHOUGH THE OVERALL REPORT ON THE PHONE-IN, BY THE OFFICE OF YOUTH AFFAIRS WITH IN MY DEPARTMENT, IS STILL BEING FINALISED.

IN PERHAPS THE MOST BASIC TERMS, THOSE WHO CALLED INTO THE PHONE-IN WERE SAYING SOMETHING ABOUT THEIR IDENTITY AND THE SEARCH FOR A PLACE IN OUR NATION.

THIS THEME MANIFESTED ITSELF IN SO MANY OF THE ISSUES THEY RAISED, FROM:

- THE SEARCH FOR WORK AND DIGNITY, WHICH REMAINS THE CENTRAL CONCERN OF YOUNG AUSTRALIANS; TO
- THE DESIRE TO GIVE AND BE GIVEN MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR ALL FACETS OF LOCAL AND NATIONAL LIFE, TO ALLOW THEM TO BETTER TAKE THEIR PART IN OUR COMMUNITY; TO
- THE VEXING PROBLEMS OF AGE-RELATED RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES;
- THE CONTENT AND PURPOSE OF EDUCATION, AND ACCESS TO IT AT TERTIARY LEVEL;
- THE PROTECTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT;
- RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER NATIONS AND CULTURAL GROUPS;
- THE USE AND ABUSE OF DRUGS; AND
- INCOME SUPPORT AND INDEED THE WHOLE RANGE OF ISSUES ABOUT WHICH YOU AS YOUNG PEOPLE AND WORKERS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE KNOW ALL TOO WELL.

ALREADY WE ARE LOOKING SERIOUSLY AT SOME SPECIFIC POLICY IDEAS ON A WIDE RANGE OF ISSUES WHICH EMERGED FROM THE PHONE-IN. THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE WORKING WITH YACA, PARTICULARLY, ON WAYS THAT THESE CAN BE DEVELOPED. SOME IDEAS ARE FOR IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION BY THE GOVERNMENT, OTHERS CAN BE DEVELOPED OVER TIME BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, AND ALSO BY THE STATES, COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

THE INITIAL IDEAS THAT WE ARE CONSIDERING COME TOGETHER UNDER THE FOLLOWING THEMES. THESE ARE:

FIRSTLY: THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN GOVERNMENT

A LARGE NUMBER OF CALLERS WANTED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT, AND WANTED YOUTH TO PARTICIPATE MORE DIRECTLY IN THE POLITICAL PROCESSES IN AUSTRALIA. SUGGESTIONS ALONG THESE LINES TOOK A NUMBER OF FORMS, AND IDEAS WE ARE LOOKING AT INCLUDE:

- A NON-PARTISAN PROGRAM OF VOTER EDUCATION FOR SCHOOLS COVERING AUSTRALIA'S POLITICAL AND ELECTORAL STRUCTURES;
- THE CREATION OF WIDER OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE IN SECONDARY EDUCATION TO WITNESS AT FIRST-HAND THE PARLIAMENTARY AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES OF GOVERNMENT; AND
- ESTABLISHING BETTER METHODS FOR INFORMING YOUNG PEOPLE IN A NON-PARTISAN WAY ABOUT ISSUES SUCH AS FOREIGN POLICY AND CONSERVATION.

THESE IDEAS ARE BEING PURSUED BECAUSE WE RECOGNISE THAT YOUNG PEOPLE ARE CAPABLE OF MAKING A FAR GREATER CONTRIBUTION TO THE AFFAIRS OF THE COUNTRY. THE PROSPECTS FOR THIS WOULD BE ENHANCED CONSIDERABLY BY A WIDER UNDERSTANDING OF HOW THE PROCESSES WORK.

SECONDLY: YOUTH PARTICIPATION IN THE COMMUNITY

ANOTHER STRONG VIEW EXPRESSED THROUGH THE PHONE-IN WAS THAT YOUNG PEOPLE WANT TO TAKE A FAR MORE ACTIVE ROLE IN THE COMMUNITY AT LARGE. THERE ARE MANY AGE-RELATED DEMANDS AND RESTRICTIONS THAT IMPINGE ON YOUNG PEOPLE. WE ARE CONSIDERING INITIATIVES INCLUDING:

- ASKING YACA AND THE INSTITUTE OF FAMILY STUDIES IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE OFFICE OF YOUTH AFFAIRS, TO LOOK INTO THE TRANSITIONAL STATUS OF YOUNG PEOPLE, INCLUDING MATTERS SUCH AS:
 - . THE OFTEN CONTRADICTORY LEGAL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE;
 - . STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN EDUCATION POLICY DEVELOPMENT WITHIN SCHOOLS; AND
 - . RECOGNISING THE CONTRIBUTION YOUNG PEOPLE MAKE TO OUR SOCIETY UNDER A YOUTH ACHIEVER AWARD.

THIRDLY: EMPLOYMENT

IT IS NO SURPRISE TO LEARN THAT ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT CONCERNS OF YOUNG PEOPLE IS FINDING AND KEEPING A JOB. SOME OF THE SUGGESTIONS THAT WE WILL BE SERIOUSLY CONSIDERING ARE:

- EXPANDING EXISTING WORK EXPERIENCE PROGRAMS FOR SECONDARY STUDENTS, SO MORE YOUNG PEOPLE CAN GAIN EXPERIENCE IN A WIDER RANGE OF JOBS;
- ESTABLISHING A NATIONAL TABLOID NEWS-SHEET CONTAINING INFORMATION ABOUT JOB VACANCIES IN ALL STATES, WITH OCCASIONAL ARTICLES PROVIDING INFORMATION AND ADVICE FOR THE UNEMPLOYED;
- ESTABLISHING A TOLL FREE 008 TELEPHONE INFORMATION SERVICE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE, ESPECIALLY THOSE IN REMOTE AREAS. IMPORTANTLY, UNDER PRIORITY ONE, THE COMMONWEALTH DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION IS NOW TRIALLING SUCH A SERVICE IN TASMANIA; AND
- PROVIDING MORE HELP FOR YOUNG PEOPLE LOOKING FOR WORK, THROUGH EXPANDING THE NEW CES YOUTH ACCESS CENTRES AND PROVIDING INCREASED FARES ASSISTANCE FOR UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE TO ATTEND JOB INTERVIEWS.

I AM PLEASED TO REPORT THAT YESTERDAY THE FIRST 6 ACCESS CENTRES WERE LAUNCHED AS PART OF THE GOVERNMENT'S NEW STRATEGY TO PROVIDE A COMPREHENSIVE SET OF SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL.

FOURTH: PROGRAMS TO COUNTER RACISM

FROM THE PHONE-IN, IT IS APPARENT THAT A LARGE NUMBER OF YOUNG AUSTRALIANS ARE CONCERNED THAT RACIST ATTITUDES MAR OUR SOCIETY. SOME IDEAS INCLUDE:

- A COMPREHENSIVE NATIONAL EDUCATION CAMPAIGN EMPHASISING THE BENEFITS TO AUSTRALIA OF A DIVERSE NATIONAL HERITAGE;
- REPRESENTATIVES OF ETHNIC GROUPS TALKING TO SCHOOL GROUPS ABOUT THEMSELVES AND THEIR CULTURE - THIS IDEA CAME DIRECT TO ME ON AIR FROM KATEY IN PERTH; THE IDEA WOULD BE TO GIVE YOUNG PEOPLE A BETTER UNDERSTANDING OF THE HERITAGE AND CULTURE OF ETHNIC GROUPS DIFFERENT FROM THEIR OWN; AND
- RECOGNISING THE BENEFITS OF BILINGUALISM IN APPROPRIATE AREAS, SUCH AS INDUSTRIAL AWARDS.

FIFTH: DRUG EDUCATION

YOUNG AUSTRALIANS ARE VERY CONCERNED ABOUT THE EFFECTS THAT DRUGS - INCLUDING TOBACCO AND ALCOHOL - HAVE ON PEOPLE. AND THEY ARE CONCERNED ABOUT HOW DRUG EDUCATION IS PRESENTED. IN ASSOCIATION WITH THE NATIONAL DRUG EDUCATION PROGRAM, WE ARE LOOKING AT NEW AND MORE EFFECTIVE METHODS.

THERE WAS A FEELING FROM THE PHONE-IN THAT ANTI-DRUG CAMPAIGNS SHOULD RELATE MORE CLOSELY TO YOUNG PEOPLE, AND THAT ONE WAY OF DOING THIS WOULD BE TO BRING YOUNG PEOPLE INTO CLOSER CONTACT WITH THE EFFECTS OF DRUGS, FOR EXAMPLE

ENABLING THEM TO TALK WITH THOSE WHO HAVE EXPERIENCED THE HORRORS OF DRUG ADDICTION.

SIXTH: INCOME SUPPORT

THE MESSAGE CAME THROUGH VERY CLEARLY THAT MANY YOUNG PEOPLE ARE NOT AWARE OF THE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES WE ARE MAKING TO INCOME SUPPORT ARRANGEMENTS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE. THE COSTS OF THESE REFORMS WILL RISE TO \$250 MILLION WHEN FULLY IMPLEMENTED IN 1988-89.

THE KEY TO OUR INCOME SUPPORT REFORMS IS TO REMOVE THE GAP BETWEEN EDUCATION ALLOWANCES AND THE UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT. IT WILL REMOVE WHAT HAS BEEN, IN EFFECT, A FINANCIAL PENALTY FOR YOUNG UNEMPLOYED PEOPLE WHO WISH TO RETURN TO STUDY AND IT WILL ELIMINATE THE DISINCENTIVE TO STUDY.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOUNG PEOPLE FULLY UNDERSTAND THE DETAILS OF THE IMPROVED SYSTEM OF ALLOWANCES SO THAT THEY CAN BE AWARE OF THEIR FULL ENTITLEMENTS. THIS WILL ASSIST PLANNING FOR THEIR EDUCATION AND THEIR ENTRY INTO THE LABOUR MARKET, RATHER THAN HAVING SUCH DECISIONS FORCED UPON THEM BY FINANCIAL NECESSITY.

WHEN WE BECAME THE GOVERNMENT IN 1983, WE INHERITED A SYSTEM OF INCOME SUPPORT ARISING OUT OF AD HOC RESPONSES TO PARTICULAR ISSUES. THERE WAS NO PARTICULAR RATIONALITY OR INTEGRATION TO THE SYSTEM.

THE CHANGES THAT WE ARE MAKING WILL BE PHASED IN OVER THE NEXT THREE YEARS. COLLECTIVELY, THEY WILL PRODUCE A MORE COHERENT AND SIMPLE SYSTEM WITH GREATER COVERAGE, MORE ADEQUATE LEVELS OF PAYMENT, AND THEY WILL REDUCE OR ELIMINATE FINANCIAL IMPEDIMENTS TO STUDY FOR THOSE IN NEED.

I HAVE ASKED THOSE DEPARTMENTS WHICH ADMINISTER INCOME SUPPORT PROVISIONS, PARTICULARLY THE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT AND THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SECURITY, TO REDOUBLE THEIR EFFORTS TO EXPLAIN THE CHANGES TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE WITH WHOM THEY HAVE CONTACT.

I STATE QUITE CATEGORICALLY THAT NO YOUNG PERSON WILL RECEIVE LESS MONEY UNDER THE NEW ARRANGEMENTS COMPARED WITH THE OLD SYSTEM. IN FACT, MANY WILL RECEIVE INCREASED ALLOWANCES AND A LARGE NUMBER WILL BECOME ELIGIBLE FOR BENEFITS FOR THE FIRST TIME.

THESE ARE ONLY SOME OF THE IDEAS ARISING FROM THE NATIONAL YOUTH PHONE-IN. FURTHER WORK WILL BE DONE ON THE GATHERED MATERIAL TO REFINE AND DEVELOP PRIORITY ONE AND TO BUILD ON THE INITIATIVES AND PROGRESS MADE DURING IYY.

IN THE YEARS LEADING FROM IYY TO THE BICENTENNIAL - THE YEARS MY MINISTER ASSISTING, JOHN DAWKINS, HAS REFERRED TO AS 3YY OR THREE YEARS FOR YOUTH - WE WANT YOUNG PEOPLE TO MAINTAIN THEIR ENTHUSIASM FOR WORKING TOWARDS CONSTRUCTIVE CHANGE IN OUR SOCIETY. CONSEQUENTLY, THE SORTS OF PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL BE LOOKING AT MOST CLOSELY WILL BE THOSE THAT MAXIMIZE THE PARTICIPATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE AND HAVE RELEVANCE TO THEIR FUTURE.

THE GOVERNMENT WILL CONTINUE TO WORK CLOSELY WITH YACA BOTH IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEAS WHICH WERE PUT FORWARD THROUGH THE PHONE-IN AND IN FURTHER CONSULTATION WITH YOUNG PEOPLE ON WHAT THE GOVERNMENT IS DOING AND ON WHAT IT SHOULD BE DOING.

WHEN I WAS INVITED TO SPEAK AT THIS ASSEMBLY, I WAS PLEASED TO NOTE THE BREADTH AND RANGE OF ISSUES TO BE CANVASSED.

IN THIS CONTEXT, I LOOK FORWARD TO HEARING FROM YACA AFTER THE ASSEMBLY ABOUT YOUR IDEAS AND VIEWS. THIS WILL HELP ALL OF US WHO ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE COUNTRY TO ASSIST THEM IN THE WAYS THEY WANT AND IN THE WAYS THEY NEED.

I WISH YOU WELL IN YOUR WORK THIS WEEKEND AND IN THE FUTURE. I AM PLEASED TO DECLARE THE ASSEMBLY OFFICIALLY OPEN.
