

Canada Student Loans Act

reasons it has become necessary for people to spend a larger proportion of their lives in educational institutions than was hitherto the case. This has resulted in a larger and larger proportion of our citizens being engaged at one point in time in the business of being students. This development makes it progressively more incumbent on all governments, and certainly on the national government of our country, to provide means to enable students to continue their studies. For this reason I am delighted to learn of the elevation in the ceiling of insurable loans up to \$115 million. In my view this is a first-rate example of federal initiative and involvement in education.

I wish to endorse the observation which has been made before in this debate, that although education comes under provincial jurisdiction we see in this act a worth-while contribution by the federal government, in co-operation with the provinces, in an area of primarily provincial responsibility according to our constitution.

The whole discussion today regarding education so far as it relates to the federal government, and therefore to all of Canada—we are the government of the whole country, of course—gives me an opportunity to go one step further and make a proposal on this subject. I propose that in line with the concerns behind Bill C-135 we at the federal level give serious consideration to the creation of a federal agency to unify and standardize education throughout the country. The variety of education among the different provinces is a very serious problem that is faced by many of our citizens. It arises directly out of the mobility of people. This government along with others is already spending millions of dollars to enable Canadians to feel at home in all parts of this great country.

• (4:20 p.m.)

I ask you, Mr. Speaker: How can our citizens feel at home in all parts of Canada under circumstances which now exist wherein the education of their children is very seriously disturbed by most movements across provincial lines? It is true, and I repeat it, that education comes under provincial jurisdiction. But surely if we in this chamber are going to be concerned about techniques and means whereby Canadians can feel at home in all parts of our nation, we must also be concerned with instituting techniques whereby a family's children are not seriously disrupted and unbalanced, or put forward or put back, or failed or passed to other grades and

levels of education just because the family happens to move from one province to another.

As you know, Mr. Speaker, education already receives substantial financial aid from the federal government. Especially is this so at the post-secondary school level. There exist a number of areas of jurisdiction which, like education, are primarily the responsibility of the provinces but within which the federal government maintains an active interest. I would suggest but two or three examples to make my case. One is in the area of housing. Housing is a field in which the provinces have a primary responsibility but in which, as all members of this chamber know, the federal government maintains an active role both through Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation and through the assignment of the full attention of a federal minister without portfolio to the responsibility of housing.

Why has this bending of the constitution come about? Why do we have a minister who is responsible for housing, when housing is not even a primary concern of the federal government but rather, under our constitution, is placed under provincial jurisdiction? It seems to me that it is for a very pragmatic reason. It is simply because there has been demonstrated a need for federal involvement that has long been recognized, and so we have responded.

Similarly, Mr. Speaker, you and all other members of the House recognize that most of the jurisdiction for mines, mining development, and so on, comes under the relevant provincial authority. Yet we have a federal minister in this area of concern who sort of backs up the provinces; he is known as the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Greene). In the same way, forestry is primarily a provincial responsibility but in the federal cabinet we have a Minister of Fisheries and Forestry (Mr. Davis). Of course, the other side of his portfolio, fisheries, is also a provincial responsibility except in so far as it involves coastal waters.

In addition to all these—there are also others but I shall not take up too much time of the House to develop this point—we have a minister in the federal cabinet, the Secretary of State (Mr. Pelletier), who is responsible for many of the educational interests of the Government of Canada, of Canada and of Canadians generally. So, Mr. Speaker, I propose that we do one of the following: (a) we ought to establish an agency under the Secretary of State to take an active lead in co-ordinating