

There was a conference held in November, 1985, of academics from across Canada who gathered together to discuss the effects of cuts on university research; as they called it, chronic underfinancing. In an interview, Dr. Don Savage of the Canadian Association of University Teachers said, "If there is this demand across the border in the United States, that is, for scientists and engineers, we have been so niggardly in dealing with our own that they will think it is reasonable to go somewhere else". Dr. Stewart Smith, the President of the Science Council of Canada said in an interview that he expects "a brain drain could well occur in the near future. I feel that we will see a very, very large-scale movement, especially among our young scientists, in the next three years or so. I am really quite concerned about it. The universities are under siege". The federal Government is cutting down, in other words, on support. So expert after expert is trying to call the attention of the Government to the danger of its policies in terms of research.

Instead of building up our research, as it promised, to the level of 2.5 per cent of GNP, we are at the level of 1.3 per cent and definitely not increasing. That is a tragic attack on our future, when we see our universities, our colleges, our research, our development, being underfunded.

The simplistic explanation we are receiving, Mr. Speaker, which I assure Your Honour the provinces do not appreciate, is that we are trying to reduce the deficit of the federal Government. This means that it will pass on this deficit to the provinces, which is maybe a saving for the federal purse but not a saving to the taxpayer, because then he or she must still pay it to the provinces. The provinces will have to find the money or our educational system and research will suffer even more. Of course, some, again simplistically, say, "Well, let the students pay for more tuition, cover it with more tuition". There is no hope that students who are raising money for tuition fees could cover to match the kind of financial assistance needed to make our educational system function effectively.

So the Tory reply that this is a cut to the deficit that is needed is not a reply at all, because what it is merely doing is passing on this deficit to others. It is not providing us with the kind of educational system that this country needs.

I shall try one last time, on this third and final reading, to appeal to another area of concern that may persuade Hon. Members opposite, if they would listen, of the importance of giving the necessary support to our educational system. Bill C-96 undercuts the future of our colleges, of our community colleges, not merely universities. We may sometimes think, "The universities provide us with professionals who have big salaries—doctors, lawyers, dentists, architects—and why should we, as citizens, support those universities to such an extent? Let them pay for it". I do not agree with that argument, in any case, but let those who find that argument appealing, think about the fact that a cut-back in funds, or the lack of adequate funding for post-secondary education, means a lack of funding for our community colleges.

Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act

• (1750)

At a meeting of the legislative committee which was considering Bill C-96 a Mr. Gallagher of Vancouver came to testify. He is the head of the Association of Canadian Community Colleges. He made a very logical presentation in which he tried to appeal to the government members of the committee to listen to a rational argument as to why it is a short-sighted policy to cut back on our community colleges. He had this evidence to give:

In 1985-86, almost two million adult Canadians will be served by a community college somewhere in Canada. This dramatic change in the structure and orientation of Canadian post-secondary education is a product of the special nature and character of these relatively new and vigorous "colleges".

There are some 165 publicly-supported colleges in Canada, with a college system in each of the provinces and the territories. They fit into the educational mosaic of each jurisdiction in different ways: most are identified as community colleges or as colleges of applied arts and technology; the CEGEP system of Quebec is a partner in the movement; some colleges operate as institutes of technology or use some other official designation.

What Mr. Gallagher points out is that there are two million Canadians who benefit from this system of education, a system which depends on federal transfer payments for its existence. If it were not for the fact that the federal Government was transferring something close to \$6 billion by direct and indirect funds to the system of education, mainly the post-secondary educational system, we would have no community college system and our universities would be devastated. I think all countries facing a competitive world understand the vital importance of a sound and advanced educational system. They understand the importance of keeping the people of their country at the highest possible level of training and retraining in terms of their readiness and excellence.

We appeal to the federal Government to understand that they must go forward into the future. The only way to do so is to strengthen our system of training and education for these two million people who use our community colleges. I should point out that this issue was eloquently addressed by Mr. Gallagher who said:

These colleges have many common characteristics. They provide post-secondary educational opportunity for graduates of our secondary schools; about 20 per cent of college students enter directly from secondary school. They attract thousands of adults who have been away from formal education, some for considerable periods of time, and provide for them the opportunity to improve their academic qualifications, to acquire basic literacy levels, to learn new skills, or to enrich their academic, technical or professional experience. These colleges have a large percentage of full-time students but part of their distinctiveness is their substantial part-time enrolment of students wishing to retrain or upgrade their skills for improved employment opportunity and more effective citizenship.

For Canadians who may hear my voice, and for Canadians everywhere, whether they hear my voice or not, two million of them will be attacked by Bill C-96. They are the losers because this Bill is not adequate to meet the needs of post-secondary colleges. It does not affect just a few college students or a few university students studying for their medical degrees. It affects the average Canadian, two million of whom will lose as a result of Bill C-96 being pushed through the House without amendment, without change, without mercy and without vision.