

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): If there is unanimous consent, the Hon. Member may ask a question. Is there unanimous consent?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Hovdebo: Mr. Speaker, what is the real impact on the universities? What will they be forced to do by this reduction in the amount of money coming in during the next five years?

Mr. McCurdy: Mr. Speaker, the solutions have been many, as I indicated during the course of my speech. In some instances the cost of tuition is being generally raised at the provincial level. There have been numerous recommendations that tuition costs be further raised so that students pay a larger share. At every university equipment purchases are being forgone. At the University of Windsor, for example, the budgetary requirement for new equipment for 1986-87 is around \$1 million. Under present circumstances, the University can allot only \$50,000. We are talking about serious deficiencies, as I mentioned earlier, such as the inability to purchase such equipment as microscopes. While microscopes are lacking lenses, spectrophotometers are being used which are upwards of 20 years old. These are hands on, manual, pieces of equipment at a time when devices are highly computerized. Repairs are not being done. For example, at the University of Toronto it was discovered that some buildings were condemnable as fire hazards. Professorial salaries are not increasing commensurate with increases in other provinces. As a consequence, many university teachers, particularly in the sciences, are now going south of the border to find more adequate salaries and well-funded research. In one university, the University of British Columbia, services to handicapped students were cut. Student assistants are now finding themselves with increasing workloads at very low salaries. Many professors and instructors in the colleges have greatly increased workloads imposed upon them to the detriment of the quality of teaching. In research institutions, of course, professors are burdened with increased teaching duties and, as a result, research suffers.

● (1530)

There are any number of responses which the post-secondary educational community has employed to meet financial exigencies. All of them are bad and all of them constitute a threat to the quality of education and, I say, a serious threat to Canada's economic future. One of the important facts to take note of is that whereas in the U.S. and Japan the participation rate in post-secondary education is around 40 per cent, in Canada it is about 30 per cent. When you add that to the fact that our research effort is less than half of what it is in those two countries against which we must compete, that dramatizes the need, indeed the urgency, for the Government to ensure adequate financing. There has to be consultation with the provinces to ensure that they allocate funds on an assured basis to ensure that universities do not retrench and are capable of providing the kind of education needed and an adequate level

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of research funding. Those are the things which the Government is quite specifically not doing.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Questions or comments?

Mr. Hawkes: Mr. Speaker, in the early part of the Hon. Member's speech he talked about hypocrisy. He quoted various people, including me. As a new Member of Parliament, he should be a little careful in talking about hypocrisy. There is rhetorical hypocrisy and active hypocrisy. I suggest to him that when members of his Party threw a Government out of office because of a Budget which was described as the fairest to poor people in this country in the 1970s, they moved from rhetorical hypocrisy to active hypocrisy. They went against everything they supposedly stood for.

I would also remind him that when speeches are made, they are made at a particular period in history. This Party, myself included, consistently talked to members of the previous Government as well as members of his Party about the difficulty this country would be in if we continued to borrow money that way. At the time that speech was made the then Minister of Finance had brought down Budgets where parliamentarians were misinformed about the reality of that spending. It turned out to be a great deal worse. More money, billions of dollars more, had to be borrowed than Members were aware of. I was elected to this place almost seven years ago. At that time 17 cents out of the tax dollar went to pay interest on our debt. Today it is 36 cents. At one point we had 83 cents to spend on programs and today we have 64 cents.

If the Hon. Member wants to avoid hypocrisy, I would like him to stand in his place and tell us whether he is one of those in his Party who believes you can just go on borrowing for ever and ever and never have to pay the piper. Or would he agree that this Government is taking sound, fundamental steps when it attempts to reduce our borrowing requirements, while at the same time recognizing the importance of health care and education by increasing the amounts allocated for those areas at the rate of inflation less 2 per cent? Have we not signalled our priorities very, very clearly by doing this at a time when most other programs are being cut? Does he not think the Government is on the right tack by showing fiscal responsibility while at the same time identifying this kind of priority, or is he like other members of his Party who are irresponsible and who would just borrow forever until we get to the day where we have less than 50 cents of a tax dollar to spend on programs? Which is it?

Mr. McCurdy: Mr. Speaker, the context in which I quoted the Hon. Member was that he and other members of his Party say they are not making any cuts. I will read it again:

We can often escape facts, we can play games with the truth, but there is a bottom line and that bottom line is that once this bill is passed, the governments which are charged with the responsibility of providing medical services and post-secondary education will have less money and will have very little capacity to tax their citizens in more ways to raise more revenue.