

3. creating stronger mechanisms for co-ordination and policy development...both within the federal government and among the federal and provincial governments and the post-secondary institutions.¹⁶

Options: Analysis and Conclusions

A variety of proposals arose from the arguments just outlined and the following, which are not always mutually compatible, received most attention from representatives of post-secondary institutions, teachers, students and from some individual witnesses:

1. Mechanisms for Review and Co-ordination

- a *public inquiry*, perhaps a royal commission, on the future role of higher education in Canada, and how it should be financed
- a *continuing Canadian forum*, perhaps a 'Council on Higher Education', made up of provincial and federal government representatives (and involving the academic community in some way), to discuss provincial and Canada-wide objectives and how to co-operate and develop concerted action to achieve those objectives
- a *focal point within the federal government* that would have a strong mandate to co-ordinate federal concerns and involvement in post-secondary matters

2. Level and Form of Federal Support

- *continuation of federal general support* to post-secondary education, through block-funding or modified block-funding to provinces, along the lines of the EPF formula
- *shifting some EPF support* to more clearly identifiable areas of federal responsibility, for example, to research and development and related university overhead costs, or to critical shortages of highly qualified manpower
- *shifting a portion of EPF support* indirectly to institutions through significant increases in student grants or loans, thereby permitting institutions to finance a higher proportion of their expenditures through substantially increased student fees

3. Student Assistance

- *increasing student aid* for needy students, making realistic adjustment to current assistance programs to take account of increased living costs and reduced opportunities for summer employment

4. Accountability to Parliament

- *increased accountability* to Parliament (and to the public) respecting general transfers in support of higher education, for example, by publicly 'earmarking' transfers for spending on post-secondary education, or by re-establishing some relationship—perhaps only periodically—between the size of the federal transfers and related institutional or provincial government costs, and by obtaining reports from provinces on the uses of federal funds transferred to them for general support of higher education

In assessing the significance and validity of the evidence, the Task Force has been acutely conscious of two basic constraints. First, although the federal government must look to post-secondary education to satisfy some of the country's important objectives, and although institutions of higher learning are essential elements in a society's life, culture and national character, the federal approach must respect the primary responsibility of the provinces in this area. Second, it is quite apparent that serious problems are being encountered in most provinces respecting the capacity of the higher education system to serve society's needs. We believe, however, that in this complex area, it would be unwise for us to attempt to arrive at specific and far-reaching proposals on how the federal government might respond to complement provincial efforts to meet this challenge.

As regards problems in post-secondary education, the complexity and difficulties of the current situation in Canada are outlined—for the university sector—in 'Canadian Universities 1980 and Beyond', a recent study by Professor Peter M. Leslie:

In this report it will accordingly be argued that universities must have a large measure of institutional autonomy as well as a dependable income which is adequate to society's expectations of them. But not too dependable! University reve-