

Food aid is being misdirected

By GERRY LASKEY

"The question we should be asking ourselves is not 'How do we keep people from dying?' but 'do we see how we are being used to see that some people do die?'"

So said Joe Collins of the Institute for Food and Development Policy based in San Francisco. Mr. Collins conducted a noon-hour discussion on the politics and economics of the world food situation. The seminar was sponsored by the local committee of Ten Days for World Development, an inter-denominational yearly project of the Roman Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, United and Presbyterian churches, which draws public attention to the human problems of development.

"It is a myth that Canada, and the United States, feeds the hungry," said Collins. "Most aid goes to countries that don't really need it. They usually have the highest standards of living in the developing world, but they have something we need."

He added that the large trans-national corporations don't

want people to see that their economic interests determine in large part the patterns of development. He said they like to have people identify with the exploitative process and with them as 'haves', and limit our concern to 'guilt trips'. "The same individuals and corporations exploit us here," he said.

"No countries are hopeless, all can become self-sufficient," he said in reference to the "triage theory", (that some countries are beyond help) mentioned by one person present.

When the question of mechanization was raised, Collins said, "it all depends on who owns the machines and what is done with them." He said that machines can be used simply to increase profit, and therefore dis-employ people, or to free them for more productive and socially valuable work.

Collins said the idea that the small independent farmer is not productive is false. He said that the most mechanized country in agriculture, the U.S., was one of the least productive per acre.

He added, "Many things that

should be done in our society are not being done in because they aren't profitable". The social needs of people are not being fulfilled he said.

"I sure hope the rest of the world doesn't have to wait for the revolution in the United States to get enough to eat," he said in response to the question of what people in North America can do to help the development process.

Collins added that people should become aware of how aid and international monetary systems work. He said that Churches, for instance, were making their concerns felt in boardrooms of corporations in which they hold shares. He said people should be aware of the injustices that exist and dispose of the myth that aid is a "give-away".

Collins gave one example of a successful campaign. He said that in Switzerland a grouping of progressive forces won a national referendum to withdraw from the World Bank. "They got out rather than try to change it," he said. "This was another thing off the backs of those people fighting it."



He said they were successful by playing on the feelings of many conservative Swiss that the World Bank was just another "give-away". Collins pointed out the political problems the farmers had with McCains Ltd. in negotiating contracts etc.

He said that land usage is a viable issue for Canadians to pursue in relation to the food question. Collins said that the attitude that economic exploitation is not a political problem and that political action is bad, works to the advantage of the large corporations. He added that if we see ourselves as a part of the system we will be inclined not to act to correct it.

At the local level Collins asked why the potato farmers of New Brunswick only grew one crop. One person said it was purely a question of economic survival.

Changes multiply chances of tuition hikes says NUS

By PETER BIRT
National Affairs Reporter
Canadian University Press

OTTAWA (CUP) — Federal financial support for post-secondary education will drop as a result of changes introduced in the House of Commons Feb. 7 in the fiscal arrangements act (FAA).

The changes in the established programs financing section of the act states that "under the new agreement federal contributions will grow with the growth of the economy rather than the growth of provincial expenditures."

In order to bring all the provinces to an average level, "the federal government will make levelling adjustments in cash payments so that provinces where federal contributions now are above the national average in per capita terms will be brought to the national average in five years; provinces where federal contributions are now below the national average will be brought up in the national average in three years."

The bill will transfer \$8.5 million in cash and taxing power to provincial governments and provide laws to implement some federal-provincial agreements reached by the first ministers at their December conference. It also outlines a number of regulations determined more recently.

CHANGES WILL LIMIT ACCESSIBILITY AND GROWTH

The long range effect of these changes according to Dan O'Connor, executive-secretary of the National Union of Students (NUS) will be to "turn people away from the classroom door."

O'Connor said the changes announced by the finance department are intended as a 20-year

program. He said the funding formula now has no relation to anyone's expenditures and will not match real growth. He pointed to the situation in British Columbia where enrolment is expected to grow steadily in the next 20 years. But in that same period, according to O'Connor, the actual federal contribution to post-secondary education will become even smaller.

Several other important statements were made in the announcement. For the first time it has been written into the legislation that "the secretary of state will meet regularly with provincial ministers to discuss matters of mutual interest and concern." This has been the practice in recent years but never before stipulated in the agreement.

Under the changes the new agreement will "continue indefinitely."

"Changes will require agreement on three years notice, and the government of Canada has agreed not to give such notice before April, 1979."

AGREEMENT ALSO AFFECTS HOSPITAL AND MEDICARE

Three new fiscal arrangements replace the old cost-sharing arrangements, but as with the previous agreements the programs will affect medicare, hospital insurance and post-secondary education.

The government said the new agreement is intended to "maintain national objectives and standards of services" and put financing on a more stable footing to help financial management at both levels of government. It further states it will "give provinces more flexibility in the

use of their own funds." In the same way as the previous agreement, this new program will not stipulate what part of the revenues will be spent on post-secondary education rather than health programs.

The federal contributions to the provinces will be made in tax transfers (a reduction of federal taxes to allow an equivalent increase of provincial taxes) and cash payments.

O'Connor said "The implication for tuition fees is that it will double or triple the pressure to increase those fees" as a means of increasing provincial revenues.

He said there will be a natural attempt by the provinces to increase tuition fees which now account for about 15 per cent of total reserve when the largest part of the financing for education (about 50 per cent) now comes from the federal government. The provinces will not want to increase their current 35 per cent commitment to the total cost of post-secondary education.

It is significant O'Connor said that the announcement was made by the federal government. The provincial governments maintain that there is little federal control in post-secondary education, a myth that even the federal government is not trying too hard to counter. But this federal action indicates the magnitude of its power.

REAL EFFECTS OF CHANGES WILL BE SEEN IN 5 YEARS

The problems that will soon arise in the post-secondary education system, not noticeably in the next three to five years but after, will show the impact of the

new financial agreement. O'Connor listed the lack of new building construction, over-crowded classrooms, and an end to talk of reforming the secondary school system as the long term effects of the program.

"If people think there is unequal access and bias to high income students now," O'Connor said, "wait and see the situation after five years of this established programs financing."

"The fight for the dollars," O'Connor said, will increase.

The day after the finance department announcement NUS sent copies of the brief and comments to provincial organizations. They plan to send information to member councils on the outcome of what O'Connor called "this closed door, cat and mouse game" that has been the federal-provincial meetings on the future of post-secondary education.

Dr. Ann Kennedy
Director of Teacher Education
for the
Resource Center for Hearing impaired
& handicapped Amherst, N.S. will speak
on the Center and topics related to
Education of the handicapped child

Monday, March 7, 2:30-3:30
Rm. 262 Marshall D'Avray Hall

Sponsored by Education Society