

# A status quo report

By **ROBERT RABINOVITCH,**  
for The Canadian University Press

The Report of the Commission on the Financing of Higher Education in Canada had been expected with great anticipation, for it had been hoped that the Bladen Commission would exert leadership in solving the great problems facing higher education in Canada today, and for the coming decade.

Unfortunately the Bladen Commission has not fulfilled this promise and the report brought down by this commission can only at best be classified as a status quo report.

It is a status quo report which is satisfied with a mere expansion of the existing per capita grant system. This system is content with meeting normal expansion of demand for higher education as has been projected by Edward Sheffield of the AUCC.

It does not attempt to analyze to any degree of satisfaction the problem of the comparatively low percentage of the college age population that is attending university in Canada as compared to that attending university in the United States.

It does not attempt to analyze or to help solve some of the most basic

problems facing the development of education in this country. If one reads the report carefully, one is left with the impression that no sociological, psychological, or even financial barriers presently exist to the undertaking of higher education.

It would seem that the sole problem facing Canadian higher education is the problem of financing the normal growth of demand for education.

## comment: the Bladen report

Although this is recognized as a serious problem and although the commission is to be complimented for its thorough analysis of this problem, nevertheless the major problem facing education in Canada is the loss of brain power to this country as a consequence of the incomplete development of human potential.

If we are to maintain the growth

rate that the Economic Council of Canada has suggested is necessary, if we are to maintain the rate of growth to which the commission pays lip service in its first chapter, then what is needed is a "supply of highly intelligent, highly trained, and highly educated people."

As the annual report of the Economic Council has stated, "The potential Canadian economy we visualize for 1970 is a high standard of living and a high employment economy, and it must therefore be a high education economy, a high resource mobility economy."

The recommendations of the Bladen Report are not designed to help achieve this increase in growth but are designed merely to maintain our present system of education with its obvious unfair, unequal, undemocratic level of opportunity to participate in the process by the population at large.

Furthermore it has been suggested by the Robbins Committee that:

"If in any country educational investment is general, and investment in higher education is particular, falls appreciably behind what is undertaken elsewhere, then, in the long run, general earning power is liable to be affected far beyond anything we may have foregone in the way of monetary

return on investment in the individuals concerned."

The Bladen Report does not make any attempt to narrow the gap that presently exists with respect to the number of people undertaking higher education in Canada and the U.S.

If we accept the premise suggested by Dean Bladen that education is a most important factor in the growth of the gross national product, as we do indeed accept this premise, are we then as Canadians doomed to the role of a second class nation with respect to our American neighbour?

Furthermore, if Denison's estimate that over 43 per cent of the rate of growth can be attributed to education proves accurate, then we must conclude that the differential in the standard of living between Canada and the U.S. is predetermined to increase.

However, this need not be the case if we as Canadians have the courage to undertake the massive reforms presently necessary in education.

Unfortunately the Bladen Commission has refused to accept the responsibility of leading this revolution but is instead merely satisfied with token reforms that merely perpetuate the status quo.

Dean Bladen's attempt at developing a rationale for the maintenance of the tuition fee is most disappointing. Although free education is a contentious issue, his corollary that the tuition fee must remain is shocking.

His rationale, that to ask the government to absorb the tuition fee might in effect jeopardize the programme he has presented, is most absurd since the retention of tuition fees maintains the status quo.

Although couched in economic terms, Dean Bladen's insistence on "resisting popular pressure for the abolition of tuition fees" is based solely on the above mentioned fear.

As Dean Bladen has said, "the case against free tuition and against free education, tuition plus stipend, is then essentially based on an anxiety to achieve the full expansion we have proposed." Herein lies the crux of the matter.

This report is not at all interested in those who are not attending university but rather is solely interested in the maintenance of the university plant in its present condition.

On pages 64 and 65 of the report,

Dean Bladen has given a most brilliant defence of free education at the graduate level. Yet all the points raised therein are as valid at the undergraduate level as at the graduate.

Dean Bladen seems to be suggesting a unique educational system in which education is free until the end of secondary school; students are then forced to pay for the next four years; and if the student continues, he again receives free education.

Is Dean Bladen thus suggesting that only the education undertaken at the undergraduate level is not of benefit to society?

Is he also suggesting that the undergraduate is the only one who can afford to pay for his education?

It is at the undergraduate level for the first time that the student is hit by the full brunt of foregone earnings.

It is at the undergraduate level that a truly voluntary decision to continue education must be made. At no other period in educational development are there more sociological and psychological deterrents to the affirmative education decision.

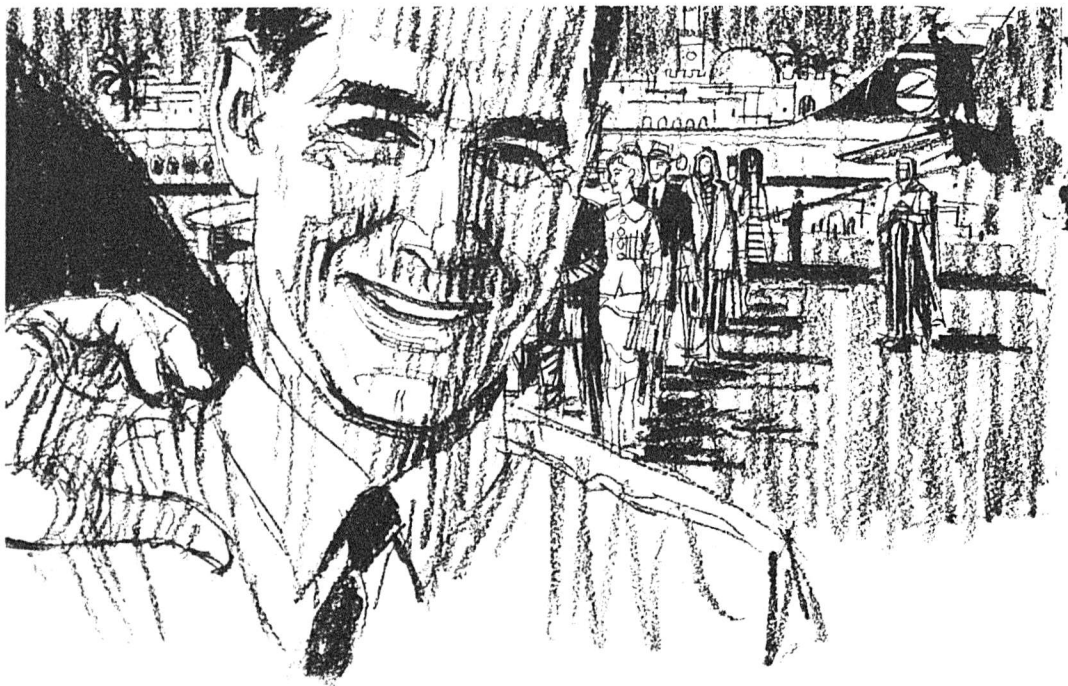
It is at this level that Dean Bladen wishes to maintain what many economists and educators believe a most serious barrier to higher education—the tuition fee. Dean Bladen's defence of this antiquated institution is irrational and unacceptable.

Canada needs more undergraduates as much as it needs more graduate students. One of the most excellent defences of the case for the elimination of the tuition fee, and the case against loans and bursary systems, is presented by Dean Bladen in his defense of free education at the graduate level.

But the development of undergraduate education is today our most pressing social problem, and all the arguments presented for free education at the graduate level are at least as valid when applied to the undergraduate level.

In conclusion, the Bladen Report has blatantly ignored the most important participant in the education process, namely the student.

We are not building institutions for administrators, nor are we concerned with the maintenance of the status quo, but rather the goal should be the full development of the individual to his ultimate capacity in an atmosphere free of financial, social and psychological barriers.



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At a joint meeting of the Men's and Women's House Committees of the Lister Hall Complex, the following dress regulations for Lister Hall Cafeteria were established.

### Women—

University women are expected to be appropriately dressed at all times while in the Lister Hall Complex. While in the Lister Hall Cafeteria, dresses or skirts must be worn. Dress slacks are not allowed in the Cafeteria.

### Men—

Men making use of the Lister Hall Cafeteria will at all times dress smartly in a manner becoming a University of Alberta student. At no time will the following attire be allowed in the Cafeteria.

- (a) Slippers, sandals and thongs.
- (b) Shorts.
- (c) T-shirts or sweat shirts without a collar.
- (d) Jackets, overcoats and any other heavy outerwear.

We hope that the people using the facilities in the Lister Hall Cafeteria will comply with these regulations. The House Committees reserve the right to request that proper attire be worn at all times.

Men's and Women's House Committees,  
Lister Hall Residence Complex.