

Federal government involvement in higher education

An act passed in 1908 resulted in the opening of the University of British Columbia in 1915. Before that, instruction at college level in British Columbia had been given mainly by institutions connected with McGill University and the University of Toronto. Until 1963, the University of British Columbia was the only institution of higher learning in the province. In that year, two colleges, Notre Dame and Victoria, became Notre Dame University of Nelson and the University of Victoria. A fourth university, Simon Fraser, enrolled its first students in 1965. In 1977, Notre Dame ceased to exist as a university.

(1) University financing

The British North America Act, which created and broadly defined Canada as a federal state in 1867, assigned to the provinces jurisdiction over education. However, the federal government did become directly involved in higher education as early as 1876, when it established the Royal Military College at Kingston, Ontario.

At the end of the Second World War, the government recognized an obligation to assist the universities which had seen their enrolments double from 1945 to 1947, with the return of the war veterans, and for the first time made direct subsidies to the universities. In 1951, following the recommendation of a royal commission on the arts, letters and sciences, the federal government distributed to the provinces 50 cents a head of their population to help support the universities. The *per capita* grant was increased to \$1 in 1957, \$1.50 in 1960, \$2 in 1962 and \$5 in 1966.

In 1966, the federal government ceased making direct subsidies to the universities, except in aid of the Royal Military College and research. Instead, the provinces were given additional taxing powers, at the expense of the federal government, and promised supplements to meet 50 per cent of the cost of supporting the universities. The total federal transfers and payments to the provinces rose from \$422 million in 1967-68 to \$1,530 million in 1975-76. In