

*Established Programs Financing*

yesterday, it seems that there is a possibility of student fees being increased this year by 15 to 20 per cent.

Some weeks ago, representatives of the student body of the University, Beth Olley and Al Shyph, came to see me about the difficulty young people are having paying university tuition and finding employment during vacations in order to help them with the finances. As things stand, they also have great difficulty getting grants and bursaries to continue their education. These young people are probably the most precious resource the country has and they are finding themselves in a catch-22 situation. They want to continue their education but cannot find the necessary funds.

This year the University of Saskatchewan is asking for a minimum increase of 10 per cent in funding for its programs. Enrolment has increased substantially. In a recent visit there I saw crowds of young people and I must congratulate the faculty for being able to deal with an increase of 8.3 per cent in the student body.

The proposed cutback will put great pressure on the University. Members of the staff and students have told me that the University does not have the capacity for any more students, and besides, the equipment, machines, tools and scientific instruments are getting old and are breaking down. The libraries are also under great stress because of the increase in the number of students. The University facilities are not capable of handling the numbers.

The University of Saskatchewan has a sense of the international community. Over the years it has offered programs for students from other countries and, has sent staff members to other countries. Recently a member of the staff, Dr. John Owens, told me that he has attempted many times to set up an international development office at the University but that funds are not available. I realize that this does not strictly come within the provisions of the Bill, but I think the Department of External Affairs, CIDA, IDRC or some other organization should look into the matter. They could look at the projects that are offered to the University of Saskatchewan from other countries, make a judgment, and recommend to the President of the University what kind of development programs it could carry out.

Yesterday I talked by telephone to the President of the University, Dr. Leo Kristjanson, a Canadian educator of high repute. He is extremely interested in what is taking place in the House today, as I am sure presidents, comptrollers and staffs of universities all over the country are. Dr. Kristjanson said that federal involvement is very important so that there is at least the appearance across the country of some justice and some semblance of equality for all Canadians. I can understand that. It is important that people who happen to live in an out of the way place in Canada through the accident of birth should also have open access to a university or school of higher learning.

Dr. Kristjanson indicated that in the current situation the federal Government must provide enough funding to ensure that students will not be prevented from entry to a university because they themselves do not have the necessary funds. I

believe he is saying that the opportunity to receive a higher education should not depend on the ability of a parent or someone else to pay the fees, that entrance should not be restricted to those people who have money. That is an extremely important principle, Mr. Speaker, and because of the proposed cutbacks I feel it will become more and more important. There is the possibility that students will be denied access to a university not because they do not meet the standards, but because they cannot find the money. There should not be any rationing of students because of financial restrictions.

One of the main reasons universities are under such strain and stress at the present time is the large numbers of unemployed young people. I have met students at university who had left high school, found a job and then lost it. In one way, this has served as a positive experience, showing them that further education would lead to more opportunities in the future. There is a mixed blessing in the fact that they cannot get a job at this time. It does give them a chance to rethink their lives and go back and get some higher education.

• (1710)

However, the Government must face the reality of high unemployment. We do not have a six and five rule, or any rule at all, when it comes to unemployment. We have a six and five rule when it comes to the salaries of civil servants and the funding of universities, but we do not have any rule when it comes to those who are unemployed. That is a number which seems to get larger and larger.

An interesting point which I believe we must face as we debate this issue is the fact post-secondary education in some countries where we do not expect that kind of emphasis is having a great effect upon world economies. In other words, the number of students being put through the university system in some countries has increased rapidly. It does not mean that the percentage of students in university is equal to the Canadian level.

However, there is a higher rate of increase in the numbers of students now in secondary or higher education in, for example, Korea and in China. I personally experienced this several years ago when I travelled to China with the then Secretary of State for External Affairs. China had a major problem after the cultural revolution when 10 years of university life were wiped out. It is now facing the problem of finding professors to fill the gap. West Germany, Sweden, Japan and the United States of America all have a higher rate of increase in the percentage number of students entering the universities than Canada. These countries, if you look at them, are the countries where economic expansion and growth are taking place at a far more rapid rate than in our country. I feel, therefore, there is a link between the percentage of people being put into higher and more highly trained education and your actual economic growth rate. Unless we take that as a very serious criterion when we decide who will get funding and who will not, we are really cutting off our nose to spite our face.

Why should we cut off funds to universities in an attempt somehow or other to try to help the economic situation, when