

Canadian Post-secondary Institutions

● (1730)

However, we must remember that the students we welcome to Canada are only a fraction of those whom we are helping to prepare as our contribution to world development. There are others whom we never see who are being trained in their own countries or in facilities available in their own part of the world under conditions much closer to those they will actually work in.

The fact is that the approach to training has changed quite drastically over recent years to take account of lessons learned from experience and to get the best possible impact out of the limited number of dollars available for aid programs. Some of these lessons have been negative. We have learned, for example, that taking students out of a poor country with many social, economic, and political problems and putting them for a number of years into a very rich country such as ours with all of our facilities and opportunities is not always the best way to overcome the brain drain which occurs from Third World countries to others.

It is a simple fact of life that when they study here for four or five years or more they would want to stay. That is a factor which we must take into account. It is a problem for both them and us. Our purpose is to assist them so that they can return home and be of assistance to their own people.

We have also learned that, while we have excellent universities and colleges here in Canada, their expertise is not always relevant to what the developing countries need. To put the lesson in more positive terms, we have seen a number of developing countries advance very strongly in the field of education to the point where they can take care of a large part of their own needs in the area of general university education so that it is no longer essential for large numbers of their students to go abroad for undergraduate training. We have gained the wisdom to realize that in a great many situations the best training and the right training is training carried out at home within institutions of their own country or region and in the context of the society that they know and hope to develop.

The fact is that the whole question of education and training within the framework of development co-operation is much more complex than it once seemed. Most of the answers involve providing opportunities in the countries where the skills are needed. We have to develop a whole range of training, not only university education, but many kinds of technical training, the acquisition of skills needed in the context of various development projects, and the development of institutions which are essential to national development in the countries with which we are co-operating.

When the Committee on External Affairs and International Trade visited Africa late last November and early last December members were struck by the fact that the skills required by these people are basic maintenance and management skills rather than PhDs.

Most of our effort is, as it should be, beyond our borders and involves finding new ways of providing our help such as links between Canadian and Chinese universities and institutions through which Canada is playing a substantial role in the process of human resource development in China. Another example is the arrangement by which Ontario Hydro will help to train several hundred officials and technicians of the Egyptian Electricity Authority.

In conclusion, I think the thrust of this motion is very good. The Committee on External Affairs and International Trade has been reviewing this since last June, as I indicated earlier. It will be reporting to the House this June. A part of that report, I hope, will contain a large measure of recommendations for human resource development along the lines of that which the member has introduced here today. I am confident that it will.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Richard Grisé (Chambly): Mr. Speaker, I rejoice at the interest expressed by the Hon. Member for Grand Falls—White Bay—Labrador (Mr. Rompkey) in seeing Canada play a greater role in the development of international cultural relations. Indeed we can all support the objectives mentioned in his motion “to foster the development of other countries and to promote international understanding”. Similarly the benefits which Canada stands to gain from academic, cultural, political and financial viewpoints—benefits which, according to him, can be obtained through our pursuit of such objectives—are considerable and justify serious measures on the part of the Government.

Mr. Speaker, I take this opportunity to inform the House that indeed this kind of program already exists in the riding of Chambly which I have the honour to represent. Once again, Mr. Speaker, we are leading the way in these cultural and intellectual exchanges, particularly at the school of aerotechnics, the only junior college in Canada where students are trained in the sector of aerotechnics, and soon in aeronautics as well. I also want to stress the importance which Pratt & Whitney management attach to these exchanges. Representatives of their clients in practically every country of the world come to their training centre and the Chambly School of Aerotechnics, in Saint-Hubert more specifically, to enable those people to learn new techniques, and inversely for them to become familiar with the difficulties these people may face.

In response to this motion, I should like to refer to a program which, in my opinion, proved to be one of the particularly strong impetus in achieving these objectives, namely the Department of External Affairs international relations program in education. As opposition Members are aware, the Government has approved an increase in funding for international cultural relations. An initial increase became effective during the last financial year, and the increase will be sustained during the next three financial years. The program budget for this sector is expected to double.