

Canada Student Loans Act

The federal government would then be respecting provincial jurisdiction or autonomy and acting according to its rights, for monetary policy is a federal and not a provincial responsibility.

The provinces are precisely complaining about the lack of money to help education in their respective territory. Let the federal government deal with the financial problem which is its responsibility, not by bills entailing running into debt which will force our students to meet financial obligations in four, five or six years, when they will face other and more important ones.

In order to allow these students to meet their other obligations, it is the duty of the federal government to help us financially to provide greater educational opportunities for our young people.

That is why—and most members of parliament, whatever party they belong to, know this—an economist named Robert Theobald, attaché or adviser of the government in Washington, advocates an advance salary for students, proving clearly that a student works for the future of his country as much as a factory or ordinary worker. Let the student therefore receive an advance salary, since he is valuable, representing for Canada a real source of future wealth and an almost incalculable potential.

If we consider the student as a real source of future wealth for Canada, why mortgage it, why make him run into debt by passing such bills? Why not provide education for all without exception, and give those who have the necessary qualities an advance salary to allow them to continue their studies?

Mr. Speaker, the federal government can play its part in this field, by giving to the provinces the financial means to administer their educational system; by enabling the provinces to make education available to all, not only to the rich or the average man but also to the poor among whom there are still a very large number of minds to cultivate and improve. We find some, Mr. Speaker, in all Canadian provinces.

We are now asking the federal government to play its part and not that of others. I shared the view of the former Quebec government as I share the opinion of the present Quebec government which would like to enforce the spirit and the letter of the law, with respect to education, without being discriminatory.

We are not asking for anything that would prove detrimental to the other provinces; we

are asking that everybody and every province without any exception be treated equally. However, as I pointed out a moment ago, if the other provinces want to get together and centralize their education system here in Ottawa, they are free to do so, but we, in Quebec, are also free in this respect.

Mr. Speaker, in closing, I wish to point out that there is but one solution to the problem, not fifty. Loans to students amount to debts they have to repay and they will not save the situation. Students should be given advance salaries, and to do so the federal government could use the Bank of Canada to finance education in the provinces. Then it would not be necessary for the maritime provinces to come to Ottawa and ask how the children of Halifax, Saint John, N.B., or elsewhere will be educated. The maritime provinces could then administer their own education system which they could finance themselves, as in the western provinces and as we want to do in the province of Quebec.

• (5:00 p.m.)

In closing, I suggest that the federal government should work in its own fields to the solution of its own problems and give the provinces the financial and monetary latitude to administer provincial affairs, this to be applicable to any province in Canada.

[English]

Mr. G. W. Baldwin (Peace River): Mr. Speaker, as to the merits of this bill I support in general what has been said by other members of this party. I think they have dealt with it adequately and successfully and little more need be said on that score. There is only one aspect I wish to bring up. The recent increases in wages and the recent welfare programs which have been introduced in this country have set the country off on a spree of inflation, and anything we can do to counter it by working toward increased productivity is all to the good. Therefore I suggest that to the extent that this program will in due course have that effect it is one which should be supported.

I listened with interest to the statement made in a very forceful and eloquent manner by the hon. member for Sherbrooke (Mr. Allard) on the constitutional aspects of this measure and its parent act, and to the statement made by the hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Caouette) who in general took the same stand. I think this is something which should concern us all. It is my view that the division of responsibility between the