

be increased, few suggested that EPF support should flow to provinces on a conditional basis affecting academic programs. In fact, there were representations opposing such federal influence. There was broadly based and strong support, however, for more accountability and for the provision of more information to Parliament and to the public respecting provincial use of the federal government's transfers to them for higher education. In this connection, most representatives from the university sector urged that future federal post-secondary transfers be publicly earmarked for higher education. In addition, proposals were advanced for a return to a modified cost-sharing approach based on periodic adjustments of federal grants to a specified percentage of provincial or institutional post-secondary expenditures.

Several briefs explored the advantages and disadvantages of greater reliance on increased student fees as a source of financing for post-secondary institutions, coupled with increased federal assistance to students to ensure that barriers to entry were not thereby aggravated. Various alternatives for student aid were also discussed, including repayment of loans, if required, on a basis similar to that now in use under the Canada Student Loan program, or through the federal income tax system.

Not all witnesses agreed with the underfunding arguments outlined above, nor was there unanimity about avoiding substantial changes in the current post-secondary arrangements. Some witnesses suggested directing support to areas of particular federal concern, for example, specific needs for highly-skilled labour or for research, with federal support to include provision for meeting overhead costs of research. A paper tabled by one witness set out this issue as follows:

Governments and universities will find it increasingly difficult to be detached from the manpower development aspects of university education as highly qualified labour becomes an increasingly important factor in Canadian productivity growth and international competitiveness.¹¹

Far-reaching changes in the orientation of the whole post-secondary education system were advocated in the brief from the Canadian Association for Adult Education, and changes in the federal approach to higher education support were suggested. Their objective is to permit, indeed

encourage, returning periodically to training or education throughout one's adult life.

Except for the suggestion of outright federal withdrawal from general transfers for post-secondary education, virtually all witnesses appearing before the Task Force, including those advocating substantial changes, urged strongly that the issues in question be studied and discussed in some form of public inquiry, 'higher education council' or federal-provincial forum before action is taken. In addition, great emphasis was placed on the need to avoid precipitous changes in financial arrangements for the sector.

The New Brunswick, Manitoba and British Columbia governments' statements referred to the country-wide purposes served by the post-secondary sector and the need for intergovernmental consultation and co-operation respecting federal involvement in the area. Provincial ministers did not, of course, comment extensively on the adequacy of funding of the post-secondary sector. However, the statements released by the governments of Newfoundland and New Brunswick referred to the increased funding that would be required to bring services in their areas closer to a national standard.

The Hon. Allan MacEachen, federal Minister of Finance, and the Hon. Francis Fox, Secretary of State, discussed federal involvement in post-secondary education when they appeared before the Task Force. Said the former in his statement:

The post-secondary...transfer...to the extent it serves federal policy...is mainly related to long-term economic development. The existence of a large number of highly qualified managers, professionals and technicians is essential for future development. It is also in the university atmosphere that a good deal of the research which generates scientific advance, invention and industrial innovation takes place. However, the program as it now exists provides no link between these obvious federal policy interests and provincial outlays financed by these transfers.¹²

The Secretary of State's brief proposed a rationale for a federal role in post-secondary education, suggested a list of objectives to guide federal programming in this area and outlined a possible federal approach for the future. The rationale is rooted in the country's requirements in such