

Canada Student Loans Act

because today schooling fees represent only a minimal part of educational fees.

This is due to the existing university systems. A student must leave his parents' home to go and study at university, for eight or ten months a year. Moreover, he must pay his expenses to live away from home. One should think of subsidizing students, of helping them to pay their expenses because they must live near the university.

Of course, when we talk of free education, among other things, we should mention in one way or another that what is necessary to pay for all that is deducted at the source. In my opinion, if we study the university education system in Canada, we will find out perhaps that it might be possible to change the priorities, in order to give this inalienable right to students.

Is it not more important to give free education and, perhaps, to spend somewhat less in other fields? Perhaps it would be possible to erect less costly buildings? And perhaps, to reduce some university services in order to give priority to free education?

In a society such as ours, I do not see how anyone could accept that only those able to pay \$1,000 or \$1,200 a year can go to university. I repeat that this is an inalienable right. Education should be made available to everybody. It should not matter whether a person can pay or not.

Before suggesting that the state should assume the cost of education, I should like to deal with the orientation our university system is taking. I think it should be advisable today to consider the very reason for the existence of the university today.

True it is something of an anachronism. It stems from a XIVth or maybe a XVth century concept, whereby educators gathered together in a center and students had to go to them.

Is that the only way to educate people? Is it the only way to have a university education system?

Today, we are witnessing lots of problems on the campuses where students and professors alike are questioning the authority of the administration and all sorts of other things for that matter. To put it in my own simple words, there is a conflict between the students, the educators and the administrators.

I suggest that we shall never make administrators out of professors and vice versa.

This should perhaps induce us to make a thorough reappraisal of our education system. We ought perhaps to wonder whether we are

[Mr. Breau.]

making the fullest use of our communication and transportation networks. Our universities remain uncharged in spite of the fact that, contrary to what prevailed 20 years ago, it is now possible to travel at a speed of 600 miles per hour and to enjoy very fast means of communication of which these institutions do not avail themselves enough.

Some do but, in my opinion, there is a duplication of facilities in these institutions. We are therefore spending a lot of money on those things while it is a matter of respecting a right or a principle. We are unable to find an alternative for the sole reason that it would cost a little more.

Surely, Mr. Speaker, the provinces and the federal government should right now give serious consideration to the role of the university in the Canadian society. They should try to ascertain whether it is not imperative that we should better co-ordinate education, programming and teaching considered as such.

Today, for instance, a professor living in Montreal could deliver his courses across eastern Canada either by being on the spot, or with the help of television. It would be very easy indeed but it is not done.

There are three universities in my province, New Brunswick. It was said that one French university and one English were needed. But I shall not go into that. In any event, there are three universities for 600,000 people. To my mind, that is too many. A lot of money has already been invested in buildings and services alone, and for duplication in administration.

I should like to repeat that I agree with the members for Champlain and Oshawa-Whitby who say that education should be universal, should be accessible to all. However, before saying that more money should be spent on education, the system should be studied in depth as well as the role of the university which was conceived in the XIVth century.

Then, we may be forced by circumstances, by costs and by the standard of living, to review the whole question and see if we might not be able to dispense education at a lower cost.

● (4:00 p.m.)

[English]

Mr. A. D. Hales (Wellington): Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the opportunity to say a few words about these amendments to the Canada Student Loans Act. Let me say at the outset that I think it has been a very acceptable and