

Canada Student Loans Act

I challenge the statement of the hon. member for Edmonton West that our universities today have a great many students who are not intellectually able to attain a university education. The standards are going up and this has automatically weeded out a number of people. However, the universities can solve this problem any time they want by raising their own entrance requirements, if indeed such a problem exists.

The other day my colleague, the hon. member for Winnipeg North (Mr. Orlikow), quoted the figures compiled by the Canadian Union of Students to which the Member of the Administration (Mr. Turner) has just referred. The hon. member for Edmonton West has criticized these figures. He says he does not believe they tell the whole story. It is true, however, that the upper income groups obviously have a great many more of their children in universities than the lower income groups. The basic point is still true. It is more difficult for a student if he comes from a low income family. We are trying to get some equality of opportunity in this country, and I believe the figures presented by the Canadian Union of Students are valid. We should take a very careful look at them. Despite what the hon. member for Edmonton West says, a great many people do have difficulty going to university. It is difficult to get sufficient funds. Students cannot always get summer employment, at least at rates of pay which will give them the kind of money they need to enter university.

• (4:00 p.m.)

The hon. gentleman said that there are bursaries and scholarships going begging in this country. That may be true, but let us accept the fact that many of these are for people who have a high level of ability. I am more concerned about the average university student, the sort of person who may not win intellectual honours but who makes up the bulk of the people in professions such as law, the medical profession and the teaching profession. There are all kinds of people of this sort who have the ability to go to university but do not have the ability to win scholastic prizes. These are the people, coming from families with incomes of \$7,000, \$6,000, \$5,000 and below, who have difficulty going to university in Canada at the present time.

We have been reminded many times that we cannot afford to waste whatever abilities are possessed by those who are capable of [Mr. Turner.]

university and professional training. This is why we need not only a student loans fund but a system of bursaries of the type which give aid to any student who is able enough to enter university.

The hon. member for Edmonton West also suggested that the emphasis is being put on the wrong place, that we should give more money for capital construction of universities and for appointment of professors. One cannot argue with that, but it comes back to the same old question of priorities. Let us not have any hospital insurance until there are enough hospitals and nurses. Let us not have a medicare program until we have trained sufficient doctors. There is never enough in this sort of context, and if we wait for these things to come about we will never do anything. We must proceed on all fronts at the same time. If we wait until every university has sufficient accommodation and staff before we say that we can now provide free, if you want to use that term, tuition and education, then we will never achieve that situation. In the same way, if we wait until we have enough doctors in the country we will never provide medicare.

My general impression of the speech of the hon. member for Edmonton West was that it was a good Conservative speech of the type we do not always hear from the members of the Conservative party, but I will go on with my own remarks having said something about his speech.

An hon. Member: We express our views.

Mr. Prittie: My point was that the Conservative party has a great many people with different political views, but the speech of the hon. member was a good Conservative speech and I congratulate him for it.

The Member of the Administration (Mr. Turner) was concerned about mobility of students in Canada, and so am I. I reread the debate of 1964 when this measure was introduced for the first time, and I expressed regret at that time that there had to be provincial quotas. It seems to me that higher education in Canada is truly interprovincial. I imagine that at Carleton University and the University of Ottawa there are students from every province in the country. Certainly at the University of Alberta there are students from all parts of Canada. This has to be so, because our universities specialize. It would cost us a great deal more for higher education than it does today if every university in the country attempted to have every