

Canada Student Loans Act

Starting from that principle, let us make the required amount available to those who need it and that without any kind of restrictions.

There is always a certain amount of injustice in the present loans plan. In fact, it seems that those are penalized who participate most in the development of the country, that is those who are not afraid of bringing up children. This is what happens when there are five, six or seven children of school age in a family. It is easy to imagine what it costs then and even wealthy families are unable to cope with education expenses if they have at the same time too many children at the post-secondary level.

Students who take advantage of these loans will have to repay them some day. Therefore, why not simply distribute equitably the necessary credit to those who need it?

We will have to come back to this matter in order to defend the freedom of the individual to get an education. Lack of money should not be an obstacle to the development of people, particularly in 1969, when there is an abundance of money. Without education, no one could possibly earn a living these days or consider playing a part in society. It is very important to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to get an education.

I hope that this amendment will be useful. And I close my remarks by saying once again that we will have to study the problem more seriously and consider granting interest free loans to all those who need them, in order to raise the educational level of our citizens, something which our people could be proud of.

Mr. Herb Breau (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to support Bill C-135 and to recommend that it be referred to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs.

At the beginning of my remarks, I should like to stress a point just mentioned by the hon. member for Champlain (Mr. Matte), as regards those students with better financial means who are nevertheless entitled to those loans under the plan. Even if their parents are rich, some of those students want to pay for their education. This feeling of independence is commendable, and I do not see how such a plan could deter—

Mr. Matte: If it deprives others.

Mr. Breau: Nobody is deprived.

Mr. Matte: Yes, because a certain amount is earmarked for this purpose.

● (3:50 p.m.)

Mr. Breau: In any case, when dealing with education, one should remember that this question is within the jurisdiction of the provincial governments and that if the federal government intends to subsidize education, it should do so in agreement with the provinces.

In any event, it is important, in my opinion, that the federal government should often take the initiative since such a moving population as ours needs a well-coordinated education system.

Another very important aspect of education that should be taken into account is the fact that conditions change from one province to the other. That is why I think it is extremely important for the federal government to deal actively with this matter.

I should like now to talk about the priority of expenditures for education, and in particular of the change which occurred in the priorities in effect over the last 10 or 20 years.

Everyone knows that the per capita expenditures of the federal and provincial governments with regard to students and the people in general, as well as in ratio to the government revenues from taxation, have greatly increased in the last few years. At any rate, I think that even with an increase in expenditures we have not managed to really deal with the educational problem.

For example, 50 years ago in some provinces and about 20 years ago in others, the principle of free secondary education was accepted.

I think that today it is even more important to get a university education, for instance a B.A. and in some cases an M.A., than it was 30 years ago.

However, at that time, the government assumed the cost of high school education while today university education is not free. Of course, a large part is paid for but education at all levels is not yet free.

Mr. Speaker, here and there, the need for education in our country has not been recognized.

I should like now to make mine the comments of the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby (Mr. Broadbent) when he spoke about free education.

Mr. Speaker, I firmly believe that education is an inalienable right. Everybody should have access to it. Therefore, I think that in Canada we should enjoy free education