

If somebody had sat down and put their mind to it, he or she could have developed a much more easily understood formula by which transfer payments could be made. This would have eliminated a lot of paper work and I suspect it would have cut down on some people's time on the job. It might have even removed the necessity for a few jobs.

Provinces as a result of this Bill will have less to spend on post-secondary education. That is the area on which I want to touch and I want to relate specifically to agriculture. I am glad to see the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Whelan) is here. He said that we have enough knowledge now to increase production on the Prairies by 30 per cent. I think if the Minister were to go there and spread around the kind of thing he does from time to time, the extra grain and the extra nitrogen that would result might increase yields even more than 30 per cent. That does not take a lot of technology. It just takes a lot of the kind of thing the Minister puts out from time to time.

Mr. Whelan: I am glad to say the same mind is productive. I wouldn't say the same thing about yours.

Mr. Mayer: The Minister has not heard me out yet. The Minister does not know whether what I am going to say will be productive or not. I would submit though that the Minister was making a good argument in the answers to some of my colleagues' questions. I think he was making a good case to vote against the Bill if he only knew what he was saying.

Mr. Huntington: If he knew what the Bill said, too.

Mr. Mayer: That is right. That is the other problem. What we will see—we have already seen it—is an increase in enrolment at post-secondary institutions. My colleague from Saskatoon spoke about Greystones in Saskatoon. It is an institution from which I graduated. I feel very proud to be a graduate of that institution. It has a good record in many areas, particularly the agricultural side. I was glad to hear reference made and tribute paid to it here today.

When we see a decline in the economy, we see an increase in enrolment at university. Students have faith in the future of this country. A person does not get an education for tomorrow or the next day, a person gets an education for the future.

Obviously the young people in this country see some potential and some opportunity. They want to go to university. They want to obtain a higher education. I go back to the kinds of thoughts people must have had in the 1930s when people went to universities. People did graduate from universities in the 1930s. There was not a lot of hope then. I am not old enough to remember it first-hand, but I am old enough to have seen some of the physical and psychological scars on people who lived through that period of time. The students at that time had faith in the country. Students today have faith in the country. They are obtaining education in increased numbers.

But at the very time you have an increase in enrolment, this Government reduces funding to universities. That does two things. It selects in favour of people who have more wherewithal to go to university, in other words, it decreases the number of

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people who go to university. As well, you have less quality and therefore less capacity in terms of education.

That poses problems, and it is something we need to address. We need to sit down and define what our priorities are. Are our priorities to look after, in many ways—and I do not mean to be unkind—the dinosaurs as far as industry is concerned? Do we need to spend literally billions of dollars on Canadair? Do we need to spend many hundreds of millions of dollars on other ventures? I could name many other institutions or businesses which have had the largess of this Government, based on what priority and on what decision-making process, we do not know. But if we are going to spend money, we had better decide to spend it in the areas we think will be an investment. When we run large and increasing deficits, we had better make sure that what we are doing with those deficits is making an investment in the future and not simply pouring dollar after dollar into paying for what some people call yesterday's groceries.

We are relatively young people in this country. I had an opportunity to grow up in the middle of Saskatchewan and I plowed land for the first time that had never been plowed before. That was the frontier. It was a very exciting time. In many ways we face an equally or more exciting time as far as the frontier is concerned, namely the technological revolution. It is the frontier of the mind. That is the kind of thing this Government has decided it does not want to support. The Government has indicated that by reducing funding for post-secondary education. I am not saying we do not need to address some of what goes on in the ivory towers at universities. There are some things that can be weeded out and there are some efficiencies that can be had. But simply throwing money at a problem will not solve it.

In addition to providing funding, the federal Government if it chose could provide a leadership role in other areas. For instance, the Department of the Minister of Agriculture—and I give him a lot of credit—spends a lot of money on research. In addition to the money spent on research there is a role for the federal Government to play in co-ordinating and getting other people involved in agricultural research. There is research going on now.

In the last month I have had a chance to visit four or five campuses and I have talked to some of the people involved in biotechnology and in the genetic engineering side of things. They are not thought of as agricultural researchers, but they are, nevertheless, very much involved in what will be an advantage for agriculture in the future. Biotechnology and genetic engineering will have great implications for both medicine and agriculture. Because these people are not considered traditionally as agricultural researchers, they are not involved and therefore they are not able to contribute as much as they are able as far as the future of agriculture is concerned.

By having this attitude and not showing the kind of leadership I think the federal Government could, in many ways it appears to be a colonial attitude. We have a frontier. We do not like to hear ourselves called colonials. We resent that because of some of the associations we have had with the past.