

view is what the New Democratic Party is all about: to alter the kinds of life circumstances that would force a woman to ever make that kind of horrendous decision. Having rejected your terms of abortion on demand I do think that MSI should quite properly cover the costs of that medical procedure as it does all other necessary medical procedures.

REGAN

My views on this subject again are personal ones because of the fact that I've never been in federal politics and in provincial politics the jurisdiction does not lie there. I personally am opposed to abortion.

I have to recognize that there are many people no doubt who might have a very different view and that it is a highly subjective judgement and that there may be circumstances that cast the matter in a different light. I think that I should participate in any discussion, consideration or study of the matter at the federal level before saying anything further than that on the subject.

The issue of abortion is one of the health and safety of the working woman. Apart from that, we see abortion as being a matter between the woman and her doctor. Yet we oppose the decadent culture that the imperialists try to impose on women that makes promiscuity and abortion on demand the conditions for the "emancipation" of women, but in reality is even more oppressive and socially destructive.

Why is funding to post-secondary institutions not keeping up with the cost of living? Does this mean education is no longer a priority?

COOPER

Well it's certainly a priority with me. I believe strongly in the importance of post-secondary education.

Although MPHEC last year made a recommendation of nine per cent or around 9.5 per cent and the provincial government provided less money than that, I think about 5.5 per cent, the provincial government did not single the universities out for bad treatment. There was a cutback in all provincial programs of every kind, not only university programs, but other general programs of government. So I don't think it would be fair to say that the provincial government is cutting back on university grants relative to other grants.

At the same time I do think that the financial situation of the universities is such that we have to ensure continued growth in funding that would allow universities to discharge their responsibilities, which I think are very important, to students and to society as a whole.

MCDONOUGH

Again, there really is not sufficient long range planning involved in government decisions. There are some instances in which some kind of cutbacks are probably quite

justifiable and necessary, but I don't think that this is generally true. I think it has more to do with a general attitude towards government spending that is appealing to the kind of climate that is created when people feel under pressure. I think the average taxpayer is feeling squeezed for all kinds of complicated reasons and looks around for somebody to scapegoat, for somebody to suggest should be restrained other than themselves. Universities become popular targets for that.

REGAN

I think that the provincial government of Nova Scotia in the last year and a half has clearly shown that they don't consider education to be as high a priority as it was. During the two years that they have been in office, they have deliberately embraced a policy of paying smaller increases at a time of high increases in the inflation rate. They have paid a smaller increase in relation to higher education than have the other two Maritime provinces despite the fact that traditionally Nova Scotia always paid more and was in a position to pay more for higher education than the other two provinces. Their position has been in contrast with the position that Nova Scotia took when I was in government in which we always did better—as well as or better than New Brunswick. I believe that the federal government must continue to review the amount that they give towards higher education and see to it that it keeps up to the needs of the universities and the needs of providing a high calibre of education.

SPURR

It should be obvious to everyone that the educational system in Canada exists to serve the big monopolies and multinationals. In the nineteen sixties when the big U.S. companies were expanding into Canada, they required large numbers of skilled personnel, and to serve these interests the Canadian state poured huge sums of money into the expansion of universities and colleges. For this the people paid higher taxes, while taxes on corporations were kept low in order to attract more foreign investment, mainly U.S. finance capital.

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As a result, Canada is now dominated by the U.S. imperialists. Now cutbacks are occurring because the monopolies and multinationals no longer need large numbers of educated personnel in order to make maximum profits. Because of this the rich and their state are shifting large sums of money into the more profitable sectors such as resource extraction, war related production and into paying off the growing government deficit. In fact, for the rich, education is no longer the priority it was in the sixties.

Yet the interests of the big monopolies are opposed to the needs of the people. Our actual requirements for education and highly skilled people like teachers, engineers, technicians, doctors etc. have not been satisfied. So, for the working people, education is still a priority.

Do you think cutbacks in education funding have affected accessibility and quality in post-secondary education?



COOPER

I think we have to acknowledge that funding for post-secondary education must keep up with the inflation rates, assuming an even registration of students in universities, because otherwise accessibility will suffer, as well as quality. I would be reluctant to say that the quality of university education has suffered at this moment, but if we continue for another two, three, four years to provide increases that are less than the cost of living, then we could be in trouble. Therefore, I advocate increases that are at least equal to the increases in the cost of living, assuming a normal growth in student enrolment.

MCDONOUGH

I think you do limit accessibility, certainly for the lower income groups when you don't do very much about ensuring jobs for people. One way that people have of gaining access to university is by being able to earn sufficient money to pay a portion of their increased tuition fees.

REGAN

I see these as real problems if the cutbacks continue. I think that the cutbacks in education can affect the quality of education and if those cutbacks continue on the same scale as we have seen in Nova Scotia over the past time period, it is inevitable that will occur. Governments are prepared to use the excuse of declining student population as a basis for not keeping up with the proper costs of operating first class universities. I think this is a very bad policy and one which will not

serve the interests of our province or our country well. We in Canada still have a much lower per cent of our young people graduating from university than the U.S. And while there may be a considerable number of people who choose not to go to University in today's society, nevertheless, those who choose to do so should have every opportunity. And it is not only they who are enriched, but our country as a whole. Many people have written that the



dominance of the U.S. and the development of new technology over the past fifty years in the world can be traced directly to the higher percentage of university grads than in any other country. I believe there's a lot of truth in that. I think that university funding and the achievement of excellence in universities is in the national interest and can be shown to provide direct returns. I think that at a time when there may be decreasing enrollments, government should maintain its commitments and utilize any additional dollars that are freed up as a result of the smaller number of students to improve the quality of education and also to improve the accessibility to students. We can keep enrollment from falling so sharply by seeing to it that financial considerations do not prevent a person from attending university.

SPURR

Yes, cutbacks have affected accessibility. Universities are becoming more and more the exclusive preserves of the

rich. Students have been hard hit by the shifting of the burden on to the backs of the working class. Many students have been forced to discontinue their studies because of the escalating costs and the fact that it is becoming all but impossible to find a job to finance studies.

Most of these jobs have the lowest pay and the hardest working conditions, and most students are unemployed. In 1978 there were more than 500,000 unemployed youth excluding students. The traditional summer job is be-

coming rare. Along with increasing tuition, the costs of food, clothing, housing etc. are going up. So the sons and daughters of the working class and the lower petty bourgeoisie are being more and more excluded from the educational institutions.

Students who continue their education go into massive indebtedness and are encouraged to go even deeper into debt by government agencies and finance companies. Because they are often unable to find jobs after graduating they are forced to look for work in completely different fields. Furthermore, they are constantly harassed by banks and state agencies for repayment of loans. So when the reactionaries claim that the loans and bursaries system in Canada makes higher education universally accessible, it can be taken for what it is worth.

As well as reduced bursaries and higher fees, there is a deterioration in educational facilities and services. That is, there are staff reductions, larger classes, less scientific equipment, fewer library facilities etc. It is obvious to anyone that the quality of education is deteriorating due to cutbacks.

What is your stand on marijuana decriminalization?

COOPER

I think that all parties in the house believe that possession should not be a criminal offence under the criminal code. I believe that it should be an offence, but under the food and drug act. The difference between the two lies in the consequences to the person found in possession. If you are convicted under the criminal code you have a criminal record and this has consequences for getting a job which I don't think is desirable in the circumstances of Canadian life today.

MCDONOUGH

The NDP has advocated removing simple possession of marijuana from the Criminal Code for many years. Stuart Leggett, M.P. from British Columbia, in two previous sessions of Parliament, attempted to introduce a private members bill to accomplish this, but failed to get support from the other parties for this measure, despite rhetoric to the effect that they supported the principle of decriminalization.

REGAN

I don't have a stand on marijuana decriminalization. Not having been in federal politics before, I was asked the question on a number of occasions while I was in the provincial field and I pointed out that it was a matter of federal jurisdiction. As an elected member of parliament, I would have to become more knowledgeable on it than I am at the present time.

My knowledge is that of the typical parent, no more, and probably no less. I certainly don't think that possession for use of marijuana for one's own purposes should be a criminal matter. I do think that