

Established Programs Financing

decided it is going to cut back on programs and areas which this Party feels is wrong. The federal Government has a responsibility to ensure that all Canadians, whether in British Columbia, Alberta, Manitoba or anywhere else in the country, have equal opportunity to get a university education. They must not be told that they must have the money to pay the tuition fees, that if they do not, they cannot attend university. What we are really doing is setting up a class system in Canada and that must not and should not happen.

My colleagues and I have stated quite clearly that the effect of Bill C-12 will be to create a post-secondary education system for the rich, not because of any restriction on the amount of money the federal Government provides to the provinces, but because of the way those moneys are allocated. It is incumbent upon us to ensure that moneys transferred to the provinces are earmarked for post-secondary education so that a miner's daughter in Kootenay East-Revelstoke will have relatively the same opportunity to attend university as an equally talented scholar who happens to be the son of a Vancouver lawyer. Under the provisions of Bill C-12, this will not be the case.

As my colleague the Hon. Member for Kootenay West (Mr. Kristiansen) noted, the proposed increase in tuition fees at UBC of 33 per cent, along with the substantially higher costs incurred by out of city students, will effectively prevent many young people in my riding from getting a university education.

This Bill will not ensure the continuation of the smaller college campuses that presently serve remote areas of the country. If the provincial Government carries out its plan to close down the David Thompson College in Nelson, British Columbia, a heavy burden will be placed on Kootenay College which is located about 150 miles away. Many of the students who would have gone to David Thompson College will now go to Cranbrook.

We are entering an era when education should be our top priority, but instead we find that the Government intends to cut back funding. In British Columbia especially, the provincial Government is prepared to cut back without showing any compassion or desire for a better system.

In all sincerity, Mr. Speaker, I say that the federal Government has a responsibility to ensure that when moneys are made available for educational programs, there is enough to meet the needs of the provinces. The federal Government should meet with the provinces immediately and obtain their assurance that they will use the moneys allocated to them to provide the best possible education for our young people.

Mr. Doug Anguish (The Battlefords-Meadow Lake): Mr. Speaker, I would also like to make some comments in this debate on Bill C-12, an Act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Established Programs Financing Act, 1977. Our youth faces a very real dilemma today. This year alone, many colleges and universities in the country—in fact, I think almost all of them—because of the increase in enrolments, have had to turn away young people who want post-secondary education. There is a double jeopardy, as the

Hon. Member for New Westminster-Coquitlam (Ms. Jewett) pointed out. A large number of the students who qualify for further education are being turned away but they cannot go into the work force because there is no room for them there either. We are very aware that the job market for young people is in a disastrous condition right across this country.

● (1240)

I remember, Mr. Speaker, as a relatively young person, that my generation did not have a lot of trouble gaining access to post-secondary education. However, the generation which follows me is suffering a real dilemma with respect to post-secondary education right now. I wonder in which direction our post-secondary education is going and where it will be by the time my children reach the age when they will want to go from high school to university. I believe parents should be very concerned about this because they are looking at the possibility that, no matter how well qualified their children are as they come out of high school, they may be turned away from post-secondary education institutions. That is very sad.

My brother-in-law just finished high school this year. He applied to the Kelsey Institute in Saskatoon. Although he was qualified, he was turned away because of the heavy enrolment. Kelsey Institute could not take anywhere near the number of students who actually applied to further their education. At the same time he and his friends, and many young people I know, are unable to find jobs in this country right now. I feel that is a very sad situation.

The generation before me fought in the Second World War. It served the country well, performed many heroic deeds and helped to preserve freedom and democracy in this country so that future generations could grow and prosper in a land with a high standard of living, one which should be second to none anywhere in the world. When the people of that generation came back from service overseas there were credits offered to them and they were able to obtain post-secondary education. Many of those people would not have had the opportunity to further their education had it not been for the veterans' credits which were available at that time. No one was turning the veterans away from the doors of post-secondary institutions, and indeed they should not have done so, because those people had performed a great service to our country during the war years. Our veterans had more than earned anything which the people of Canada gave to them to help them obtain a good life once they returned home. Because these veterans were helped, they in turn helped this country to grow and to develop into what it is today.

But what about the young people of our country today? It is the young people who are going to have to keep the country moving, to keep up the standards of education and academic excellence, to keep pace with other countries in the world. If we are going to turn away our qualified young people and refuse them the right to improve their educational standing, what will become of this country in the future?

Another thing which comes to mind, Mr. Speaker, is the young people who have been out of the high school system for