

Canada Student Loans Act

How did it work? How was it administered? What did so-and-so really declare to make himself eligible for a loan? I think the amendment is an improvement but I have reservations about the age group. I agree with the hon. member for Oshawa-Whitby that in these days of great adult education development it would be unrealistic to impose an age limitation in this bill. That would be *passé*, a bit old-fashioned.

It should be underscored, Mr. Speaker, that while student loans have helped a great many young people in Canada to further and finish their education, it would be foolish indeed to think that loans of themselves are enough to educate the young people. My own children are on the threshold of university education and when I think of the financial burden which I will not be able to bear alone, this becomes a matter of great sensitivity and something much more than an academic question, if I may risk a pun.

I have known personally some of the problems of working one's way through college, to use an old expression, Mr. Speaker. There was a time when those who had gone through that mill would express the view that it was a desirable thing and it should happen to everybody. I totally disagree. When I think of the wasted hours, the wasted energy, the misdirected hard work that went into the process, I thoroughly agree with the late Dr. Sydney Smith, a Canadian whom I admired greatly. Recalling his own experiences he said he would not wish them upon any young person in this or any other country. It is a very, very difficult problem indeed. In these days of inflation and a rapidly rising cost of living, let us not delude ourselves that this measure will relieve our young people or their parents of the whole burden. It is a good help but it is only part of the job.

Mr. Speaker, in this afternoon's very interesting discussion some hon. members have dealt with the problems of the universities. I note in particular the remarks of the hon. member for Gloucester (Mr. Breau) in this connection. However, I do not think that the most important problem facing our universities today is a financial one. There are problems which transcend this. The whole question of academic freedom is emerging in a manner which, in my days in the cloistered halls, would have been unexpected. At that time we thought that the great danger to academic freedom would come from without. But we are now living in an age in Canada and in the United States, and perhaps in most

of the western world and even beyond that, when academic freedom is threatened more from within the institution than from without. This is a problem with which universities must grapple, and some of them do so unwisely and bring upon themselves a proliferation of anxieties which make the whole academic process extremely difficult.

I have often wondered what would happen if I retired from this place—or should be retired from it by my electors—and whether I would return to the ivy towers to live out my declining years. But looking at the trouble at universities today I know that unless I were to gird my loins with new strength I should have to aspire to the Senate for more ideas and inspiration—

An hon. Member: There are lots of ideas over there.

Mr. Macquarrie: My friend says there are lots of ideas over there. There may be a renewed elixir of life there, too.

Mr. Speaker, it is well known to members of this House that universities today are troubled, perplexed and torn and that quite often the danger comes from within. This may be one of the revelations in our society. Indeed, I have feelings about the future of this particular institution, our Parliament, and it seems to me that at the present time the greatest dangers are not from without but are from within. However, this is a topic for another day; indeed, I have a feeling it will be a topic for a good many other days.

Having said that, Mr. Speaker, I recognize that other problems are of vital importance—finances for the individual Canadian, for the young person aspiring to equip himself to better serve himself, the country or the community—and that these things are of tremendous importance as the task of making a living and making ends meet becomes more and more acute. To use the current expression, this is most difficult for the group usually called "the affluent poor", the middle-range group. Indeed, they may find it even more difficult if the white paper recommendations are enacted.

In recent years we have seen a tightening of job opportunities for young people in the summertime. This is another reason why loans are so important. Inquiries and complaints from students about the lack of summer employment are increasing every year. Last year was particularly bad for students seeking summer jobs and I am afraid that this summer will be worse.