

While the federal government does not directly influence the level of tuition fees, it does, however, play a major role in helping students cope with costs and in facilitating access to post-secondary education. In 1994, Parliament approved the Canada Student Financial Assistance Act. This Act has already allowed significant reforms to the Canada Student Loans Program that include an increase in loan limits for full-time students from \$105/week to \$165/week, the introduction of a new approach to need assessment to target more aid to those who need it most, the introduction of a 60% aid-sharing approach with provincial and territorial governments, and pilot projects with four provinces to provide grants for students with permanent disabilities.

This year, approximately 130,000 students will benefit from some \$200 million in additional aid.

The Minister of Human Resources Development will also be working with the provinces to develop appropriate principles and objectives to guide the Canada Health and Social Transfer and to continue federal-provincial cooperation in the areas it covers which include post-secondary education support. The department will also continue to work with provincial authorities as well as stakeholders to further improve the Canada Student Loans Program as circumstances evolve.

The federal government recognizes the importance of post-secondary education to our economic and social development and remains committed to supporting the national effort to help all Canadians acquire the knowledge and skills to compete in the world.

TRANSPORT

FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL STRATEGIC HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM—NOVA SCOTIA—RESTORATION OF FUNDING TO DESIGNATED PROJECT—REQUEST FOR UPDATE

(Response to question raised by Hon. John Buchanan on June 5, 1995)

Nova Scotia, which has jurisdiction over highways, has pursued the objective of providing a four-lane divided standard on the Trans-Canada Highway in the province since the 1970s. The federal government, in striving to meet

its objective of providing a safe and efficient national transportation system, has provided financial assistance over the years as funding has become available.

The original Canada-Nova Scotia Highway Improvement Agreement was signed on July 20, 1987. The agreement was for a four-year, \$100-million program, to be cost-shared on a 50-50 basis. Some \$26 million of the program was allocated to two projects on Highway 104; \$17 million to the New Glasgow By-Pass and the balance to improving the segment from the New Brunswick border to Oxford.

The original agreement was amended in August 1991 to extend the term of the agreement by two years and to add \$3.0 million for the Millbrook Interchange on Highway 102. Included in the August 1991 amendment was a change to the allocation for the Highway 104 project to \$19.4 million for New Glasgow and \$10 million for the segment to Oxford. Spending on Highway 104 was extended to the end of the amended agreement, i.e., March 1993, and now totalled \$29.4 million.

In February 1992, the agreement was amended a second time to add funding for additional projects on Highway 104. The term of the agreement was extended to March 1994 and \$34 million was added to cover various work related to four-laning five separate segments of the highway from the New Brunswick border to the Kempton by-Pass; at Amherst; between Nappa River and Thomson Road; at Mont William Road; Salt Springs to Kempton; and between the Highway 102 junction at Kempton. Under this amendment, planned spending on Highway 104 totalled \$63.4 million. None of the new projects could have been completed solely with the funding provided under the agreements, i.e. without additional provincial funds above the cost-shared portion.

In June 1993, the agreement was amended for the third time; \$60 million was added to the value of the agreement, bringing the total to \$197 million and the term was extended to March 1997. The allocation for Highway 104 improvements went from \$63.4 million to \$123.4 million to complete the projects initiated in earlier amendments. Subsequent administrative changes have brought the total to \$123.7 million.