

*Private Members' Business*

of institutions, universities as opposed to the colleges. As well, I suppose I should say parenthetically, when we talk about parallel systems of colleges, in Ontario we are talking about quite a different system than the CÉGEPs in Quebec and the community colleges in B.C. There is a great deal of diversity within provinces, classes of institutions that are recognized as post-secondary, and a great deal of diversity between provinces in that respect.

Even in looking at universities, one of the problems of any over-arching regulatory anything is that it tends to suppress the kind of diversity that is very useful in terms of the development of different approaches to different kinds of curricula and courses, and new thrusts that in the long run can be of benefit to making our educational system more appropriate to the need: the needs of our students, the needs of our society, and the needs of our economy.

It is true that this huge diversity, with each university and each college finding its own way, for example with each professor often teaching a course at the basic introductory level in economics, being different from one institution to the other. Obviously, this creates problems for students who are transferring from one university to another within a province, from a college to a university, from a college or university from one province to another, and certainly a very difficult problem in respect to recognizing the credentials of international students who come to this country to study.

The hon. parliamentary secretary pointed out that this is a two-way street and that very often Canadian students have difficulty having their credentials recognized elsewhere. It is a problem, but it certainly is not a problem that is going to be solved by means of any over-arching regulatory body, as has been suggested here.

In fact, I doubt whether it is conceivable in the terms that have been suggested by the hon. member that the problem can be solved at all. That does not mean that we should not take seriously the question of transferability. How can it be brought about? It certainly is not going to be brought about by an action by this Parliament. It is a matter of provincial jurisdiction and an area in which we have no power to act.

• (1340)

It seems to me that we could use this opportunity to suggest to the university and college community, and to the ministers of education at the provincial level, that they should attempt to find some way to facilitate the transfer of students from one institution to another; to recognize, as the hon. member mentioned, life experience, as it is called, as a basis for admission; to make it possible for international students to gain reasonable admission to institutions here; and, by the way, to gain appropriate recognition of whatever professional credentials they have.

The problem is that we place too much emphasis on credits. We place too much emphasis on course descriptions and not enough emphasis on what students actually know. It seems to me that we can either go to a different system altogether or use some combination of systems of evaluations to address the problem. I would recommend to the AUCC and other groups involved in the colleges and universities, to have some kind of objective evaluation, not of what courses students have taken, or of what credits they have, but of what knowledge they have earned. Knowledge gained in formal class or knowledge that has been gained by virtue of work experience is knowledge that in some fashion can be measured. We have to confront this problem.

I have confronted this problem as chairman of the board of St. Clair College and as a professor at the University of Windsor. We have wracked ourselves trying to figure out how to resolve this problem. It seems to me that the only ultimate solution is to get around this tyranny of credits and course descriptions to try to find a means of evaluating what students actually know, what those with work experience actually know, and what international students are capable of demonstrating they know as a basis for placing them appropriately in a post-secondary institution of their choice.

It may very well be that some evaluation of credits would be included in the equation. An objective examination and an appropriate interview with those who seek to have their past experience evaluated would seem to me to be one way of approaching it. So, I would suggest that.

If there is any means at all by which the federal government can exercise some leverage, perhaps it would be in respect to EPF transfer payments which