

*Adjournment Debate*

as ours, where increasingly society is making greater demands upon us and when we are accelerating into a highly technological society, that someone would have thought to ask some basic fundamental questions.

Where is this technological society taking us? What impact will it have on me, on you, and on Canadians generally? One would have thought that that would have been something which the government would have wanted to fund.

The questions that are being raised today are these. Are there any other massive cuts coming? Will there be other reductions? Will the pain be even worse than it has been? Will our young Canadians suffer? Will they be unable to be competitive with young people from other countries?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Speaker, I just said very briefly that when I raised the question in the House on November 9, I received a reply that I thought was incomplete and I therefore gave a summary of the massive government cuts and tried to show the negative impact on every region and all the people of this country.

I therefore ask the minister now to try to elaborate, to tell me exactly how they will proceed to offset these cuts.

**Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Defence):** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of the Secretary of State, I would like to take the opportunity to provide further information in answer to a question raised by the hon. member for St. Boniface on November 9 concerning the funding of post-secondary education.

As the Secretary of State—who is right next to me—said recently, education is a national priority for our government. We have an explicit commitment to co-operate with the provinces and territories in funding a post-secondary education system based on excellence and equal opportunity.

At the First Ministers' Conference last November, the Prime Minister proposed setting up a national task force on developing human resources for the year 2000. This task force would be particularly concerned with identifying the problems of human resources, examining the results obtained by the present education and training

systems and formulating recommendations on the desired changes.

[*English*]

The Prime Minister's representative, Dr. Douglas Wright, President of the University of Waterloo, is working closely with the Council of Ministers of Education to develop the proposal. The Prime Minister confirmed that the federal government will "carry its fair share of the burden to ensure that all young Canadians receive a first class education as they confront a world-class challenge".

Currently, the largest single element of federal support is the Established Programs Financing, EPF, arrangements. Under this program the federal government transfers cash payments and tax points to provincial governments for post-secondary education.

In 1989, the program demonstrated strong growth despite financial constraint. That does affect the level of increase in EPF. The program provided \$5.4 billion last year. It is providing \$5.7 billion this year. This is a 6 per cent increase, not a cutback.

Combined with other forms of more direct support, total federal support to higher education is around \$7 billion of the total \$12.5 billion to be spent this year.

[*Translation*]

Access to post-secondary education for all Canadians is a priority for both federal and provincial governments. The Canada Student Loans Program, together with provincial programs, has helped over 1.5 million Canadians continue their studies. This year, more than \$400 million will be spent on financing loans to a quarter of a million students, twice the amount spent five years ago. The loans program is now being reviewed in order to balance present and future needs of both students and governments.

• (1915)

With the implementation of the new Canada Scholarship Program, the best students will be able to earn degrees in natural science, engineering and related disciplines. The Centres of Excellence Program will give some of the best researchers of this country a unique opportunity to work together on projects that are vital to our future. Good news for our future engineers, scientists and researchers.

Mr. Speaker, these are some of the achievements that testify to our serious commitment to post-secondary education in Canada. Our future economic and social development depends on our ability to co-operate with