

Established Programs Financing

Federal and provincial government cutbacks to the post-secondary education system disproportionately affect women who accounted for over 95 per cent of the increase in full-time enrolment over the last decade and whose enrolment in post-secondary education continues to increase at a higher rate than that of men.

My colleagues and I in the NDP caucus have been fighting the Bill now before Parliament that would limit federal funding increases to provinces for post-secondary education to the six and five formula. Just as women are attempting, through education, to pull themselves out of the low-wage job ghettos that entrap them, institutions are being forced by government cutbacks to further restrict women's accessibility to education.

The Canadian Council for Learning Opportunities for Women recently pointed out to a House of Commons committee studying the Bill that the education system in this country is badly out of sync with women's educational needs. In 1981-82, enrolments in high tech courses at Canadian community colleges were 95 per cent male and less than 5 per cent female. In 1982 fewer than 3 per cent of women university graduates had degrees in engineering, computer sciences or any of the sciences. Many of the math and science programs are inhospitable to women because of the way they are taught and the culture associated with them.

Another accessibility problem exists for part-time learners, the growth student group of the 1980s. It is estimated that over half the students at colleges and universities will be part-time students by the year 2000. The enrolment of women in part-time study increased by a startling 250 per cent over the last decade. In 1981-82, 66 per cent of all part-time students were women. It has been found that women are making career decisions at about the age of 30; that is when they are going back to school. But the part-time student is still perceived by both governments and institutions as not being serious. The result is that many courses and programs are not open to them, child care is almost non-existent and where it exists, faculty and support staff are given preference. The costs incurred by part-time students are the same, per course, as full-time students, but part-time students are not eligible for the \$50 a month educational allowance deduction for books and transportation, and the tuition fee deduction is not transferable from the non-working spouse to the working spouse.

The federal Government recently extended loan assistance to part-time students, but in a manner that further entrenches the misconception that part-time students are not serious and are not in financial need. The federal Government merely puts up collateral for a loan to the part-time student whose only difficulty is a temporary cash-flow problem. Repayments on the loan must begin one month after it is received, with interest accruing immediately and eligibility based on a more stringent means test than that of full-time students. The use of family income criteria for loans deters the participation of married women and works to maintain their dependency on the family.

A few weeks ago, during International Women's Week the Hon. Member for New Westminster-Coquitlam (Ms. Jewett)

asked the Minister responsible for the Status of Women if she was aware of the difficulties faced by part-time learners, the majority of whom are women, and what she was doing to eliminate discrimination from the federal Loan Assistance Program. The Minister's response clearly indicated to me that she was totally unaware of this problem and had never seriously considered one of the most crucial issues facing women today—accessibility to education. She said:

—I am painfully aware of that fact, as my sister suffers under those consequences. I reiterate that my concern is her concern, and it is something that I believe we should do something about. But again, I state very clearly that the law is not there to discriminate specifically against women. It does discriminate against part-time students and unfortunately women are the ones who suffer most. But 'twas ever thus in our society.

So much for the federal Government's concern about women in the post-secondary educational system. That concern, I suggest, is clearly seen in what the Government is attempting to do in this Bill.

Mr. Speaker, may I have permission to call it five o'clock.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): By all means. It being five o'clock the House will now proceed to consideration of private Members' business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS—PRIVATE BILLS

UNITED GRAIN GROWERS LIMITED

The House resumed consideration from Monday, April 2, of the motion of Mr. Bockstael that Bill S-10, to amend the Act of incorporation of United Grain Growers Limited, be read the second time and be referred to the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Private Bills and Standing Orders.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): Is the House ready for the question.

Some Hon. Members: Question.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Guilbault): The question as follows: Mr. Bockstael seconded by Mr. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi) moved that Bill S-10, an Act to amend the Act of incorporation of United Grain Growers Limited be now read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Miscellaneous Private Bills and Standing Orders.

Is it the pleasure of the House to adopt the motion?

Some Hon. Members: Agreed.

Motion agreed to.

Mr. John Evans (Parliamentary Secretary to President of the Privy Council): Mr. Speaker, I think if you would seek unanimous consent you will find that there agreement to move Bill S-10 on to Committee of the Whole and through third reading stage at this time, rather than sending it to the