

Established Programs Financing

[Translation]

Mr. Ian Waddell (Vancouver-Kingsway): Mr. Speaker, I would like to say a few words about this Bill and subsequently move a motion.

[English]

As economic development critic for my Party, I would like to say a few words about the post-secondary education cut-backs. As I said, I will have a motion to move at the end of my remarks.

As I understand the matter, the federal transfer payments to the provinces are going to be cut back \$5.36 billion by 1987 because of the 1981 Liberal Budget, and further cuts are likely. Last year the federal Government eliminated the revenue guarantee under Established Programs Financing with the result that \$1.9 billion has gone from post-secondary education. With this Bill, the six and five procedure will cost \$118 million for an already strapped post-secondary education system. In fact, the Canadian Association of University Teachers estimates that the system is underfunded by \$250 million to \$400 million just for essential services like libraries, student aid and student services.

At the same time as there is made available \$500,000 per Liberal riding—and I see the Hon. Member who revealed that to *Maclean's* is here—for unworkable, short-term, job-creation projects, money is being cut to universities, colleges and technical institutions, wherein lies the true economic recovery in Canada. I want to say something about that.

What we are seeing is a cutting back of funding in the very area we should not be cutting back, namely education. Thousands of students are being turned away from our universities, colleges and technical schools. In my Province of British Columbia, 20 per cent of the applicants have been turned away. The situation is worsened by inadequate student aid. Therefore, people will be able to attend school based on their ability to pay rather than their ability to absorb the education and profit from it.

Grants in British Columbia have been cut back by 40 per cent this year. Tuition fees are going up; 25 per cent at Simon Fraser University and 33 per cent at the University of British Columbia. Even those in the middle class are being threatened. We are in a situation now where even those who can afford to go to university will not be able to because the number of applicants for university is being cut back. This is the first time this has happened in Canadian history. This was expressed eloquently by our critic, the Hon. Member for New Westminster-Coquitlam (Ms. Jewett), the former President of Simon Fraser University. She is really an authority on education in Canada. She has spoken on this matter in the House.

I want to return to what I said a minute ago. Today's youth, who are tomorrow's workers, are not going to get the education or knowledge that they need to participate in the new high-tech society. This is the key to economic recovery. We in Canada are going through a revolution. We are entering a new type of society. We will produce a generation of functional illiterates, a lost generation in this kind of society. This is what

the new Minister of State for Youth (Mrs. Hervieux-Payette) was saying. She recognized the problem. She said this:

If we don't tackle the problem globally—by all the partners in society—a generation will be sacrificed or a generation will revolt. If I was in the youth group myself, I would not tolerate being excluded from participating in society.

This Government, of which she is a member, is prepared to tolerate, by Bills like this, the possibility of these young people being excluded from participating in the kind of education that we need to provide the required literacy for the society we will face tomorrow.

We in the New Democratic Party have some solutions, some positive proposals. We believe that full employment should be the overriding economic goal of this country. The federal Government must stop cutting back on its share of post-secondary funding. In addition to the federal Government doing this, my province, which has a very reactionary Social Credit-Conservative Government, cuts back further. It does not even pass on the limited funds sent by the federal Government. This has caused a crisis. We have a crisis in post-secondary education in my Province of British Columbia. From what I hear from other Members, we have a crisis in the other provinces as well, but we certainly have it in our province and that will stop our recovery.

We propose also that a joint federal-provincial emergency fund be set up. It could use the \$102 million saved on post-secondary education through six and five as a start. Also, the \$75 million to be used by DND to hire young people could be spent more productively on post-secondary education. The money for the Ministry of State for Youth would be better spent directly on post-secondary education. We need a parliamentary task force to address this crisis facing young people, jobs and education. We need a new funding formula to make governments more accountable for their post-secondary spending.

In conclusion, Bill C-12 seeks to cut back even further by limiting federal spending on post-secondary transfers to 6 per cent and 5 per cent. This will cost the system about \$118 million. If our young people are to take advantage of this new high-tech society we are moving into, this is the very last thing we should do.

I have an amendment, Mr. Speaker. I move, seconded by the Hon. Member for Humboldt-Lake Centre (Mr. Althouse):

That the motion be amended by deleting all the words after the word "that" and substituting the following therefor:

"Bill C-12, an Act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Established Programs Financing Act, 1977, be not now read a second time but that the Order for a second reading be discharged, the Bill withdrawn and the subject matter thereof referred to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs".

That is my motion. I have signed it and I will pass it to the Chair. The purpose is to allow the Committee to take the subject matter and deal with the whole problem in a broader way. I am sure Liberal and Conservative Members can support this amendment because we are in a crisis in post-secondary education today. That is why I am proposing this motion.