

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTIONS TO  
HIGHER EDUCATION

By terms of the British North America Act of 1867, Canada has a federal form of government with responsibility for the organization and administration of public education within its borders vested in each provincial legislature. The Federal Government has retained the responsibility for the education of some 136,000 Indians, 10,000 to 12,000 Eskimos, other children in territories outside the provinces, inmates of provincial penitentiaries and families of members of the armed forces, although wherever possible provincial educational facilities are utilized. In addition, the Federal Government makes grants for vocational education; provides a per capita grant to each province to be divided among its universities; participates to a considerable extent in informal education and makes grants-in-aid generally for research in the universities, which assist educational institutions indirectly.

With the exception of the three Canadian Services Colleges (mentioned later) the universities and colleges in Canada are under Provincial or private control. Fees are charged in all cases although numerous scholarships, from various sources, are available to students. Since their earliest history the universities with few exceptions have been handicapped for lack of sufficient income. Disparity in provincial economic resources has caused regional problems in the expansion of higher education programs for those universities mainly dependent on provincial grants for their working budgets. The original endowments of the older universities were depleted through time and the growth of capital funds for many years was inconsiderable. Despite assistance from such sources as the Carnegie Corporation and the Rockefeller Foundation of New York, the problem of finance became increasingly serious and reach climatic proportions between the two world wars during the period of the depression.

During the recent war the special training courses and research projects inaugurated by the Department of National Defence and the National Research Council, and the generally improved financial conditions of the provinces resulting from full scale employment in industry, permitted a slow improvement in university finances.

After the war the universities and colleges of Canada played a major role in the programme of rehabilitation of war veterans by education. Geared to a post-war enrolment of some 35,000 full time students, the academic institutions were required to provide facilities for instruction for more than double this number. For the considerable expense involved in this project the Federal Government, through the Department of Veterans' Affairs, provided supplementary allowances to the universities, based on the number of veterans enrolled in each institution, in addition to direct monthly grants to veterans in attendance. As the inflated enrolment subsided, the universities found themselves caught in the squeeze between decreasing income and an increased civilian enrolment at a time when expenditures were rapidly rising. As a result, the universities requested some form of financial assistance from the Federal Government consistent with constitutional limitations. When the Federal Government appointed a Royal