

Western Canada Drought

Our community colleges are in fact a brilliant, versatile and flexible way by which we can modernize our resources in terms of our people, by keeping up to the standards and levels of world-wide technology. Our colleges reach out to the average Canadian by providing an opportunity to upgrade their skills and abilities so that they can hold down and obtain jobs. To hold back on federal funding of post-secondary education as the Government is doing is to hold back on these Canadians. Ultimately, it will be a devastating attack on our people.

Mr. Gallagher also pointed out that:

Because of their responsiveness, the colleges have, particularly in recent years, become significant forces for economic development and revival at local, provincial and national levels. They have been identified in their own provinces as engines for economic growth rather than as institutions outside the mainstream of public concern.

The establishment of innovation centres to stimulate the economy has been a recent phenomenon in Canada. Many of Canada's colleges have turned their energies to innovation and the transfer of technology to the work place as part of their commitment to provincial and national economic development through entrepreneurial innovation.

Here is a Government which out of one side of its mouth talks about its concern for our entrepreneurial ability, about research and development, about being ready to face the modern world and compete, about having free trade so that we can obtain access to more markets and compete. At the same time, out of the other side of its mouth, it utters policies which take away that very ability we should have of being able to provide those entrepreneurial skills to Canadians to compete in this very competitive world. It makes no sense. It is a self-defeating policy. I suggest we should be moving in the opposite direction.

If this Government is to talk about cutting the deficit, then let it proceed with cuts in other areas. In terms of other priorities, there can be no greater priority than for us to train our people for employment and to make them resourceful, to give them the skills they need in order to compete and in order that our country can compete in the world and become a nation that will not feel threatened by trade barriers.

Our future hinges on research and development. It also hinges on a well educated and trained community of people. Community colleges train not only the average person to upgrade his or her skills as an adult but they continue to help throughout his or her lifetime. We no longer have an educational system in which a person exits at the end of grammar school, as was the case when our Constitution was first drafted. No longer do we have a system in which one exits at the end of high school. We now think in terms of ongoing education. Some call it recurring education, while others call it continuing education. We now understand that we have to have an educational system in place that will continue to educate Canadians throughout their lifetimes. We must understand that at no time do we come to the end.

In accordance with our Charter of Rights and Freedoms we see senior citizens at the ages of 60, 65 and 70 availing themselves of educational opportunities in our community colleges. It is true that they might not be able to put these

skills to work in the workforce, but they are enriching themselves. They have a right to that education. The Government is not allowing the funds necessary to the provinces, as has been the case in the past, to be able to cope with the needs of our educational structure. By having a growth pattern of only 5 per cent per year more than what it was in the past—

• (1800)

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I must interrupt the Hon. Member to tell him two things. It is now six o'clock and his 20 minutes have expired.

It being 6 p.m., pursuant to order made Wednesday, June 11, 1986, the House will now proceed to the consideration of Private Members' Business as listed on today's Order Paper.

PRIVATE MEMBERS' BUSINESS--MOTIONS

[Translation]

AGRICULTURE

SUGGESTED TABLING OF REPORT ON DROUGHT IN WESTERN CANADA

The House resumed, from May 20, consideration of the motion of Mr. Boudria, seconded by Mr. Foster: That an humble Address be presented to Her Excellency praying that she will cause to be laid before this House a copy of the report presented to the Prime Minister pertaining to the drought in Western Canada.

Mrs. Lise Bourgault (Argenteuil—Papineau): Mr. Speaker, when the question of drought in the Prairies is raised, we cannot but be concerned about the situation facing farmers and livestock producers. The Government wants to solve this problem by means of concrete and direct measures.

As a first step, a task force was set up last summer to determine the extent of the problem and the impact of the drought. This vital task was entrusted to the Hon. Member for Assiniboia (Mr. Gustafson), Parliamentary Secretary to the Prime Minister. In fact, Mr. Speaker, a report on the subject is to be tabled shortly. Not long after the task force was set up, and as already mentioned by the Hon. Member, the Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Wise) announced a \$48 million program to help Western livestock producers who were severely hit by the drought. Since producers in my riding were also affected by drought, and I know how serious this can be for Western farmers. It is expected that 500 farmers in British Columbia and 38,000 farmers in Saskatchewan and Alberta will be eligible for compensation. This covers direct assistance for 400,000 acres in British Columbia and 21.2 million acres in Alberta and Saskatchewan. The Government has decided to improve the lot of the many farmers who have suffered under very bad weather conditions during the last three crop years. The contribution will be in addition to \$683 million in crop insurance payments paid to Prairie grain growers this year. About 88,000 farmers who insured their crops this year will be