

At a time when research and development is required in our country like it has never been required before if we are to remain competitive, and given the fact that new farming technology is coming onstream in countries around the world, and if Canada is to play a meaningful part, how are young people going to obtain access to faculties of agriculture in our universities with skyrocketing tuition fees? They are already at levels that would prohibit youngsters from low income families. These are families unlike his own. It is not that he is a wealthy man, but not many Canadians are fortunate enough to have a father with the income of a Cabinet Minister. I am talking about average families in western Canada. How can people afford to send their youngsters to university?

● (1730)

Mr. Whelan: The Hon. Member intimates that I come from a rich family or that I may have a tremendous income as a Cabinet Minister. I can tell him that our daughters are not able to get student loans because of the fact that I am in the Cabinet and a Member of Parliament. So the three of them work part-time and one of them works as a waitress in the university bar to earn money so she can go to school. We think that is the way they should go to school. They should earn as much money as they can, if they can find a job.

What I am saying is that in most universities the faculties do not provide the kind of people we need. Right now I have about 60 people we have taken from universities. We are paying them to upgrade their education to at least a master degree or Ph.D. so we can do the research that we want.

I have seen many universities that are not even providing the kind of courses we need for those kinds of people. For instance, the private sector should be doing more research, the kind of research we want in agriculture. They are not doing it but we think there will be a swing. We have been meeting with some of the companies and asking them to put 1 per cent of their GNP into that kind of research. We think we are having some success.

There will have to be a change in the universities in educating those people. This Friday I will go to the University of Guelph for the installation of the new President of the University of Guelph. We will have more discussions there. That is a school that has a background of agricultural education but it is the only one in all of Ontario, which is the largest producer of agricultural products in Canada. It is the largest producer provincially speaking. It is the one university in all of Ontario that has an agriculture faculty. There is one at the University of British Columbia. British Columbia does not produce as many agricultural products in dollar volume as three counties in Ontario, Essex, Kent and Lambton, when you add them all together. There is a need even in the Province of Ontario to be doing more because it is the greatest province. Education is under the jurisdiction of the provinces, under the Constitution.

I remember the provinces warning Mr. Pearson when he was saying that Newfoundland did not even have a university at that time. They said: "You are interfering, Mr. Prime Minister, in provincial jurisdiction". That was said during the

discussions that took place at that time. He replied: "I do not care. Every young Canadian should have equal opportunity to education, no matter where they come from in Canada".

So in our society we have probably developed one of the best systems. We did it very fast in order to make university education available for many young Canadians and with a program that is probably one of the most reasonable in terms of cost of any university system in the world. Even today with the increase in tuition fees, it is still one of the most reasonable ones in the world.

Mr. Althouse: Mr. Speaker, from the short remarks we heard from the Minister today I think it was established that there is a new concept in economics. It is no longer a question of inflated dollars that we must worry about, since the Minister has discovered something called an inflatable dollar which is worth something like \$5 billion from \$1.9 billion.

He raised a couple of other interesting aspects of university funding in his remarks. One was the question of being able to finance agricultural research. I note that the veterinary colleges do receive some funding across borders from the federal Government and sometimes from neighbouring provincial governments. Those sources of income are becoming traditional in the country. I believe that under the provisions of the Bill before us, funds have been used to finance the agricultural colleges on an ongoing basis.

I would ask the Minister to comment further on the aspect of the post-graduate M.A. and Ph.D programs. He tells us that the colleges do not have very many candidates in those kinds of programs. Would he not admit that part of the reason there are not many candidates in those post-graduate courses in agricultural colleges concerns the ability of agricultural students to get loans? He pointed out to the House that his daughters were not eligible to get student loans, not only because their father is a Cabinet Minister, which is a very good reason since Cabinet Ministers do have some net income. However, the fact is that most farm children are unable to get student loans because of the way the asset base is computed on the student loan form.

A very small farmer may have several children, virtually none of whom will be eligible for a student loan until they quit school and get a job for a year or two in order to prove they are independent of their family. At that point, in spite of what they have been earning at their other jobs, they are distinctly separate from the farm and their parents and thus eligible for student loans. But when they come directly through high school and the initial college level and if their parents own assets at all, they are not eligible because they are the children of such parents even if the parents have no net income.

Mr. Whelan: Mr. Speaker, I will be as short as possible on this question but I can remember very well when there was no such thing as a student loan. Most of the complaints I get from young farmers is that the course they want to take was overloaded. It was not because they did not have funds to go there; there was no room for them.