

Canada Council

take some considerable time for it to be implemented.

These and other factors contribute to make the future needs of the council difficult to estimate. This is why the government has decided to propose a temporary measure of assistance. According to section 20 of the act the council is entitled to receive donations to be used for the general purposes set out in section 8. Accordingly we intend to include in the final supplementary estimates for the current fiscal year an unconditional grant of \$10 million which will enable the Canada Council to meet its minimum foreseeable requirements during the next few years. We know this money will be well spent and will serve to promote the arts, the humanities and the social sciences at a time when it has become imperative to foster Canada's development in these fields and thus strengthen the identity and the unity of our country as we approach our centennial.

Right Hon. J. G. Diefenbaker (Leader of the Opposition): While no notice was given in advance that this matter would be raised, this is one occasion when I think there will be general agreement with the course of action suggested.

I realize the difficulties under which the Canada Council operates. With the money it has had available it has done a great deal to advance the arts, the social sciences and the humanities. Just how serious is the question of higher education is shown by a telegram which I received shortly before I came into the house. It sets out the attitude of mind on the part of the student bodies of the universities in the maritime provinces, which is a matter of great concern in other parts of Canada. I will read only the portions of the telegram that set out the material matters I have in mind:

Concerning the unnecessary increase in university fees, announced Tuesday, March 16, 1965, by the association of Atlantic universities, the student union of Mount Allison University deploras this untimely action, especially when the report of the Bladen commission on higher education and the results of the Canadian student means survey have not yet been released...

The students of this university are prepared to exact every pressure possible. Presently Mount Allison has the highest undergraduate tuition fees in the maritime area, a situation which we feel is completely unjustified in light of the economic difficulties of the region. The student union of Mount Allison is taking the immediate action of calling a maritime regional conference of the Canadian union of students at this university in order that a detailed brief may be forwarded to the provincial and federal governments. Furthermore, the directors of the association of maritime students are meeting Saturday, March 20, 1965, at the University of Moncton in order that immediate action be taken.

[Mr. Pearson.]

We strongly suggest that the federal government place this grave matter on the order paper in the House of Commons for immediate consideration, as this is an urgent matter of regional and national interest. Students do not feel that they can bear the result which will definitely prove disastrous to the principles of higher education—

That is signed by William Allison Pinkney. The Prime Minister mentioned the question of the expansion of scholarships and fellowships by the Canada Council. I think that is a worthy objective. The Canada Council must have the necessary funds in order to permit the widest possible extension of the opportunities of university education. That brings me, in the most kindly way also, to ask where are the 10,000 scholarships that we heard so much about two or three years ago.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Certainly \$10 million will not make provision for that expansive policy as promised. I think, in general, that when the supplementary estimates come up this matter can then be discussed in detail. In the meantime I have brought to the attention of the Prime Minister this telegram, which I believe represents a serious situation. After all, if our Canadian university students have to pay these increased fees, ultimately it will be this nation that will suffer if the numbers of prospective students are reduced because of inability to attend university though possessing the intellectual qualifications that would assure a greater contribution by them in the years ahead.

Mr. D. M. Fisher (Port Arthur): We think this is a very good step, Mr. Speaker, and that the government will receive a very favourable response across the country with regard to it. I suggest to the Prime Minister that some of us may be somewhat surprised at the idea of splitting the humanities and social sciences from the Canada Council. Certainly one of the saddest things about the Canada Council and the concept that really Mr. Brooke Claxton had of it is that the endowment part has not really been supported in a wide way. We had the rather ironical situation with the first really substantial grant that came from private funds to the Canada Council, in that it was for certain fields of endeavour for which the Canada Council really had not considered it was responsible. That particular endowment, devoted to medicine, science and engineering in the main, in a sense expanded the scope of the Canada Council's activities beyond what had been contemplated.