

# TELE-FACTS

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## *Special Study On Junior Colleges*

AN ADDRESS BY

**Hon. R. H. McKinnon**

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**Hon. R. H. McKinnon**

Good Evening, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Considerable interest has been shown in the Special Study of Junior Colleges recently completed by Dr. Andrew Stewart. The Survey Committee on Higher Education commissioned Dr. Stewart to make the special study for them. The Survey Committee is made up of representatives from the Cabinet and representatives of the University: Honourable A. O. Aalborg, Provincial Treasurer, Honourable F. C. Colborne, Minister of Public Works, and myself, as Minister of Education, represent the Cabinet; Dr. Walter Johns, President of the University of Alberta—Edmonton, Dr. H. S. Armstrong, President of the University of Alberta—Calgary, and Dr. C. M. McLeod, Chairman of the Board of Governors of the University, along with Mr. Brian Macdonald, Secretary of the Committee, represent the University.

Dr. Andrew Stewart has been Chairman of the Board of Broadcast Governors for the past few years. Previous to this he was President of the University of Alberta. He is very well qualified to make the study requested by the Survey Committee on Higher Education. Dr. Stewart has presented his report to the Committee and it will now be our job to study his proposals in detail and make recommendations to the Government on the various aspects of the report.

If Dr. Stewart's main proposal is accepted, a major change in the pattern of post high school education would result. Since this would affect all students in the Province, the Honourable Mr. Manning has asked me to appear on this "Tele-Facts" program to outline Dr. Stewart's main proposal. This is in keeping with the reasons for these

broadcasts—to keep you informed of developments so that your Government may have the benefit of your views before any major changes are implemented.

Before giving you the outline of the proposals contained in Dr. Stewart's report, I would like to outline the development intended by The Public Junior Colleges Act, 1958. The intention of the Public Junior Colleges Act, 1958, was to establish locally controlled and operated colleges which would offer a wide range of programs of studies, and educational services, adapted to the needs of high school graduates in the community. It was intended that the colleges would offer the equivalent of first-year university studies in a number of patterns, and that students completing one year at the college, in these patterns, would proceed to the university for two years toward a bachelor's degree. It was clearly intended that the colleges would seek out the needs of high school graduates for post-school programs, other than university studies, and that the colleges would assume the responsibility for providing educational opportunities for those who could not proceed to the university.

The proposals as outlined by Dr. Stewart are as follows:

**(1) District authorities for post-school education.**

Dr. Stewart proposes that the Province be divided into "college districts". These districts would be established by order-in-council and the districts together would include all parts of the Province. No one should be left out. Each district would be administered by an appointed board and its responsibility would be the organization of all post-high school education in the district. In addition

to this there would be a provincial board which would co-ordinate the activities of the various district boards. Each district then might operate a "comprehensive college" to provide for the post-high school educational needs other than university for that district. Dr. Stewart would anticipate a fairly high degree of provincial support for the comprehensive college, but would also anticipate the possibility of revenue raised from local sources. The functions of the district boards would include services to young people, mainly in the age group 18-21 years, although adult education programs could also be considered.

## (2) **Relation of District Boards to University Education.**

The District Boards would not be responsible for University education but certain University transfer courses would be offered at the College. In making this suggestion that University courses be offered, Dr. Stewart suggests that a two-two plan be adopted as the regular pattern for post-high school education in the Province. This would mean that each high school student would proceed to take two years at a "comprehensive college" and two years at a University to obtain the first degree. This would mean an additional year to get the first degree in many cases. This pattern is fairly widely accepted now in the United States and is the approach to be developed in British Columbia.

## (3) **The Main Proposal**

- (a) It seems desirable that the University of Alberta should adopt the requirement of a minimum of four years from Grade XII to the first degree.

- (i) The knowledge in all fields is increasing rapidly. The significance of a degree in relation to the growing field of knowledge it represents can be maintained only by putting more pressure on students which many of them would not be able to meet successfully, or by extending the time required.

- (ii) Many Canadian universities, and most universities in the United States, do not confer degrees before the end of the sixteenth year. The adoption of this requirement would only bring Alberta, in this respect, in line with accepted practice in many other places.

- (b) It would be required that students should, as a normal rule, attend the University which confers the degree for at least two years.

The Public Junior Colleges Act, 1958, provided that the Colleges might offer the courses of the first year of the university. On request of the Lethbridge Junior College, by amendment to the Act in 1964, Colleges were permitted with the approval of the University to offer courses other than courses of the first year. In 1965, with the approval of the University, the Lethbridge Junior College introduced second-year courses in a number of programs. As a consequence, students taking these courses may spend only one year at the University before receiving a degree.

It seems desirable that, as a normal rule, students should attend the Uni-

versity which confers the degree for at least two years.

The University confers the degree. The reputation of a University, which is important to its graduates, depends on the substance behind the degrees it confers.

(c) The combination of two years at College and two years at University is proposed. With the system requiring four years from Grade XII to the first degree, the combination of two years at College followed by two years at the University, which is widely accepted, has considerable advantages.

(i) Many students who transfer directly from high school to the University have difficulty in making the transition.

A study made by the University of Alberta showed that, ten years after the year of admission, 38% of the students had not obtained a degree. Dr. Stewart says we cannot be complacent about this failure rate. Probably many of these should not have been admitted. Some students who spent two years at a College might come to the conclusion that they should not continue at the University, and would enter an occupation with some preparation related to it. Others who would transfer to a university would, provided the level of achievement required for admission were realistic, be better able to meet the problems of transfer.

(ii) The condition that students take two years at a college followed by two years at the University before receiving a degree should give the colleges more flexibility in organizing their programs of studies.

It should be expected that a substantial number of students who obtain a college diploma will intend to transfer to the University to complete the requirements for a degree. This implies that the University will be prepared to offer credit for college courses. It should not be expected that all combinations of courses in college diploma programs will be designed to permit transfer to the University; nor should the University be expected to extend credit to all diplomas awarded by the college. The colleges must be prepared to offer a wide range of courses and many programs consisting of combinations of courses. All of the programs would have some general educational significance; but all of them would have some vocational orientation.

Clearly, close liaison and cooperation between the District Boards and the Universities is essential.

Dr. Stewart has also suggested possible modifications of the main proposal. These will need to be studied carefully. The role of the Institutes of Technology must be considered in studying junior colleges in Calgary and Edmonton.

I should point out that there are three Public

Junior Colleges operating in the Province at the present time. Lethbridge Junior College has an enrolment of 500, taking courses in University and vocational education. They are also offering many short courses to evening class students. Red Deer Junior College is in its second year of operation and so far is primarily concerned with University transfer courses. Medicine Hat Junior College is in its first year of operation and is also primarily concerned with University transfer courses at the present time. Grande Prairie Junior College has been established but has not yet started its operation. In addition to these there are three private Junior Colleges offering University transfer courses as well as other programs.

It is hoped that, with the development of Junior Colleges, several advantages should accrue to the students in our Province.

- (1) Post-high school education can be obtained closer to the homes of students.
- (2) Easier transfer to University can be made.
- (3) Some relief from the pressure of numbers on the two University campuses will be effected.
- (4) Flexibility in courses can be arranged to meet local needs and desires.

I trust that this brief summary will be of interest to you and will help you to understand this developing aspect of education in our Province.

I am sure that this will show our interest, as a government, in the higher education in the Province. You have no doubt noticed that recently University operating grants have been increased by \$235 per student, and support will also follow for the Junior Colleges. Thank you very much.

Good Evening, Ladies and Gentlemen.