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A New Deal For Alberta Universities

AN ADDRESS BY

Hon. E. C. Manning

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Hon. E. C. Manning:

Good Evening, Ladies and Gentlemen:

Welcome again to "Tele-Facts". Tonight I want to give you a resumé of some very important reports that I have released to the news media of the Province since I spoke to you a week ago. I refer to the reports that we have received from the Board of Governors of the University of Alberta, containing the recommendations for a new University Act, which we will be submitting to the coming session of the Legislature, which, as you know, opens on the 17th of next month.

This matter is of far-reaching importance to you, as citizens, and as parents, as the recommendations proposed will substantially alter the pattern of University administration in this Province and have a profound effect on the growth and the operation of present and future Universities in Alberta. I want you to know what is proposed and what we will be submitting to the Legislature so that you will be able to discuss these proposals and let us have the benefit of any viewpoints or recommendations you care to make.

Up until now, Alberta has had but one University administration with two campuses — one in Edmonton, and the other in Calgary. There has been only one Board of Governors for both Universities, one Senate, one Chancellor, and so on. With the rapid growth of the Calgary campus, the rapid increase in the number of student enrolments, and the realization that before long, still other campuses will be required to meet the projected student enrolment, there was need to re-examine the whole structure of University administration to determine what changes are necessary to best provide for the future requirements.

In 1964, the Board of Governors of the University appointed a special committee, under the Chairmanship of the late Hon. Mr. Justice Hugh John MacDonald, to review the University Act, and particularly the form of University government that has been in effect in this Province thus far. Unfortunately, the Hon. Mr. Justice MacDonald took ill and died in March of 1965. The committee of seven members, that had been set up by the Board of Governors, held joint meetings with two representatives of the Association of the Academic Staff of the University here in Edmonton, and two representatives of the Association of the Academic Staff of the University in Calgary, and this became known as the Joint Committee. The draft report of the Joint Committee was completed in September of last year. This was then re-examined, both by the Staff Associations and by the Board of Governors, and as a result of these studies, the Board of Governors has presented to us their final report and recommended amendments to the University Act.

We really have before us, therefore, three reports — the report of the Joint Committee, to which I have referred—two members of the Joint Committee have filed a minority report that contains some viewpoints that are certainly deserving of serious consideration — and then the main report, which embodies the recommended revision of the University Act. Tonight, I would like to give you just a few of the highlights of the Committee's recommendations. There are six major recommendations, or categories of recommendations, contained in the report, and I will quickly run over them.

In the first place, they recommended that the Provincial University's two campuses (that is, the campus here in Edmonton, and the one in

Calgary) become two separate Provincial Universities, each under its own distinctive name. They also recommend that any Provincial University that may be established in the future should likewise be an autonomous and distinctively-named Provincial University, unless there may at times be a satellite University associated with one of the existing Universities. They recommend that each University should be subject only to such external control as may be given to the Co-ordinating Council and to a new body to be called the Universities Commission, in order to provide for co-operation and co-ordination of effort and to avoid any unnecessary duplication. That is the first major recommendation — that from here on, instead of having just one University administration over the two or more campuses, these institutions should be set up as distinctly separate and self-autonomous Universities.

The second group of recommendations is that there should be established a body corporate to be called the Universities Commission, which would make recommendations to the Government of the Province, concerning the Provincial Universities, and which would be a body between the Government and the separate Boards of Governors for each of the Universities. This is a new innovation — the idea being that if you are going to have two or more separate Universities, there is need to have some Provincial Commission, which would act as a body between the Government and the two or more Universities, dealing with their financial needs, and so on. I will give you more details of this in a moment.

The third recommendation is that there continue to be a co-ordinating Council to deal with matters of common interest to the Universities.

In the fourth place, it is recommended that each University have its own Board of Governors,

that would be a body corporate, having ultimate authority over all the affairs of the University for which it was established. The idea is that in discharging its functions, it should have well-defined methods of communicating and consulting with a General Faculty Council. The two bodies should act in the co-operative use of their powers wherever the need arises.

The fifth recommendation is that for each University there should be a General Faculty Council. This should be the senior Academic body, having the main responsibility and immediate power in guiding its University's academic growth, and in maintaining academic standards. The General Faculty Council, under the authority of the Board, should have power of decision in some areas, and powers of initiation and recommendation in others.

Finally, the sixth group of recommendations is that for each University there should be a separate Senate, which would serve as what the Committee refers to as the "public conscience" of the University, providing for "the explanation of public needs to the University and of the University needs to the public."

These are the major recommendations, and you can see that this will establish an entirely new type of University administration in this Province. I needn't weary you with a lot of detail within these recommendations, but I think you will be interested to know a little more about some of the major ones.

The Universities Commission that I mentioned a moment ago, is something new. The Committee recommends that this Commission should consist of a Chairman, who would be a full-time officer, appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council,

and that there should be eight other members to be appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council. This Commission would have power to enquire into the financial needs of the Universities, to advise the Government with regard to the grants to be made by the Legislature for meeting those needs, to collect and examine and make available information relating to University education throughout Alberta, to assist the Universities in the preparation and execution of such plans for the development of the Universities, as may from time to time be required to the end that they may be fully adequate to meet the needs of society. Its powers also would be to decide in the event of a conflict between two or more Universities, with regard to the extension or expansion of their services; and also to receive requests for capital and operating funds from the Universities, to consider these in the light of present and future plans, and then to make recommendations to the Government; to receive the funds granted by the Government and distribute these in terms decided upon by the Commission, between the two or more Universities. It is also suggested that the Commission should appoint, from time to time, members of the public to be statutory members of the Senates of the Universities, and also that, the approval of the Commission should be obtained by each University regarding students' fees, salary schedules, and pension and welfare plans.

This is quite an innovation, and I think you can see the structure that is being recommended. The proposal amounts to this, that instead of having a number of campuses under one administration, each campus should be established as a separate University with its own Board of Governors, its own Senate, its own Chancellor, its President, and Vice-President, and so on; and that there should

then be this new body called "the Universities Commission", which would be between the Government and the Universities, particularly to deal with their financial needs. The Commission would be responsible to ascertain, in consultation with the Universities, what the requirements are going to be for each of them, for each ensuing year, and then make its representations to the Government and be an advisory body to the government. When the Legislature allocated the funds for University purposes for the coming year, these would be paid to the Commission, which in turn, would make the allocation between the two or more Universities on the basis of the need as it exists.

I might mention, before we close, that in addition we are having a comprehensive study made of Junior Colleges in Alberta, because this has a direct relationship to future University expansion and facilities. By 1980, it is estimated, there will be over 30,000 University students in this Province. This means there has to be a tremendous program to provide both the physical facilities and also to obtain the staff necessary for the operation of two or three University campuses, each of a substantial size. For these reasons, these matters certainly are of far-reaching public importance.

May I just say, in closing, in the Government's view, these Committees and the Board of Governors have done an excellent job. We think these reports are very constructive, and the recommendations on the whole are very sound. There are some minority viewpoints expressed, both the Joint Committee and members of the University Board of Governors, which rightly must receive careful and proper consideration; but we are now proceeding to prepare the legis-

lation, on the basis of this report, and then after we get a draft bill on that basis, we will be able to discuss the variations that perhaps should be considered, particularly in the light of some of the viewpoints expressed in the minority reports, and also some of the viewpoints that you may express to us between now and the time the legislation is enacted.

Thank you for being with us again tonight. Join us again, next week, same time, same station. Good-night.