

admired by foreign governments and foreign visitors from across the world.

With this particular motion, which seeks to gut to the tune of more than \$8 billion the inflationary protection that would have been accorded to provincial Governments to deal with the issues of post-secondary education and health, we see that the Government is not committed to providing leadership in these areas, but simply passing the buck.

Most of us will remember that when the Minister tabled his last Budget, he said, and I think it rang well throughout the chamber, "the buck stops here". Well, it is clear that the buck does not stop here. The Minister in his statement said that, in fact, the buck stops here. Quite clearly that is not the case, and that is why after debate upon debate I feel compelled to move a motion. That motion reads as follows:

That the motion be amended by deleting all of the words after the word "that" and substituting the following therefor:

Bill C-96, an Act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Care Contributions Act, 1977, be not now read a third time, but that it be read a third time this day six months hence.

That is my motion, and I believe it speaks to the heart of the problem we are facing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Chair finds the motion in order. Debate will proceed on the amendment. In the meantime, questions and comments.

Mr. Nunziata: Mr. Speaker, I assume I am asking questions of the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps)?

You will note that we have been in the House since 11 a.m. and, with the exception of Private Members' Hour, we have been debating this particular piece of legislation. It is now approximately 7.20. Therefore, we have been debating this for about seven hours. You and I have both participated in this debate since it began today. We all know that there have been other occasions to debate this particular piece of legislation.

In the seven hours that we have been discussing and debating Bill C-96, not one single, solitary Conservative Member of Parliament has risen to make submissions. Not one single, solitary Conservative Member of Parliament has asked the following question, with the exception of the Member for York East (Mr. Redway). The question, although intelligently put, was more intelligently answered by my colleague, the Member for Humber—Port au Port—St. Barbe (Mr. Tobin). The question is: Why have the Conservative Members of Parliament not risen in their seat to defend Bill C-96?

As I pointed out earlier this day, it is obvious that Bil C-96 is indefensible. If it were, why then would the Conservative Members of Parliament not stand in their places to try to defend this Bill? That would lead one to conclude that the Conservative Members of Parliament who have been present today, and there are not many of them, do not support the Bill. So much for parliamentary reform.

Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act

I would submit that by not standing up and speaking to this legislation, the Conservative Members of Parliament are doing a very serious disservice to their constituents and, indeed, to their respective communities.

Liberal speaker after Liberal speaker has pointed out the inadequacies of this particular piece of legislation. They have pointed out that this legislation is regressive, it attacks post-secondary education in Canada, it attacks health care in Canada, and yet our submissions, our pleas are falling on deaf ears.

The Government is intent to pass this piece of legislation notwithstanding that group after group, and individual after individual at committee has spoken out against this legislation. I would like to ask my friend and colleague from the riding of Hamilton East (Ms. Copps) to indicate to the House her views as to why the Conservative Members of Parliament opposite are not speaking out. I note that the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) has just entered the Chamber. I hope my friend, the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps), will comment on this legislation that was introduced by the Minister and join me in challenging him to stand up during this most important debate and tell us why he believes that this legislation should carry.

● (1920)

Ms. Copps: Mr. Speaker, the Member for York South—Weston (Mr. Nunziata) is right on. We have not heard from government Members and I think the reason they have remained strangely silent on this Bill is that they are embarrassed by it. They recognize that what the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) has done in one fell swoop is pass along an \$8 billion problem to the provinces and territories. They know that it will result in a situation where health care will be offered on an unequal basis to the citizens throughout our country. The educational system at the post-secondary level will deteriorate from province to province and we will see a greater concentration of regional problems than we have already seen during the course of the present Government.

A third cause of some embarrassment to the Prime Minister and the Conservative cabinet Ministers who are telling the provinces that they should tighten their belts to the tune of \$8 billion is that according to the most recent news from Ottawa, Conservative cabinet Ministers spent 53 per cent more on their personal staff last year than the Liberals did in their last full year in office. In fact, those figures do not include the staff of the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) whose budget has jumped almost 50 per cent over the two year period, to \$6.5 million. When one considers the number of political staff, the budget for the political staff of Conservative cabinet Ministers is \$13 million compared with \$8.6 million under the previous Trudeau Government.

I too would be somewhat embarrassed about going to the provinces and telling senior citizens and young people that they will have to tighten their belts and pay more for health and education while the Government is increasing its own personal