

Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act

goes out of sight. This is a very serious cut-back to the future of our young people, and the students from less affluent homes will continue to bear the brunt. The children of the elite will get to university but the children of those who are in the working and middle classes will have to suffer. They will not get the education and they will then become the hewers of wood and drawers of water, thanks to the Tories.

Mr. McCurdy: Mr. Speaker, I listened with interest to the speech made by the Hon. Member for Eglinton—Lawrence (Mr. de Corneille). Of course we agreed with him when he called for a revolt in the Tory ranks in protest against the legislation that is before us today. I am also appreciative of the revelation that the Leader of the Liberal Party is now engaged in the kind of consultation process with universities in which we have been engaged for some 18 months now.

● (1240)

I listened with particular interest to the Hon. Member when he referred to the 6-and 5-cuts which were perpetrated by the Liberal Government. Those cuts clearly hurt the post-secondary educational system in Canada and made their own contribution to cutting back accessibility. The Hon. Member indicated that they were not permanent changes as were the changes suggested in the legislation before us. I was quite reassured to hear that. I just want to know when the money was put back.

Mr. de Corneille: Mr. Speaker, my hon. friend will find that it immediately and automatically reverted back because the legislation was only for the periods of 6-and 5-. Inevitably there was some loss over that period, but the formula reverted back automatically to the original formula which remained in place. If the Hon. Member examines the legislation more closely, he will find that it automatically reverted. In fact for one year the Tories brought in about a 7.4 per cent formula which followed the existing formula automatically.

What I am criticizing is that for the next year, the year leading up to March 31, 1987, they have cooked up a new formula which breaks the existing agreement that does not expire until March 31, 1987. They are not only breaking their election promise to keep the 1977 funding formula, they are also breaking into the middle of an agreement period which does not expire until March 31, 1987. It is disgusting for any Government to break faith in terms of an agreement which exists between the Government of Canada and the provinces.

I should like to refer to the activities of the Right Hon. Leader of the Opposition. Ever since he was elected to the House he has been active and has shown a total involvement in the whole area of youth and post-secondary education. Hardly a month has gone by that he has not visited a large number of universities and colleges to listen, to speak with, and to assess the problems in that area of our future.

I thank the Hon. Member for his question and the opportunity to make that clarification.

Mr. McCurdy: Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. Just to ensure that the facts are clear, I proffer a further question to my hon. colleague. Were the six and five cuts made with the unanimous consent and enthusiasm of the provinces? Was the \$350 million which was involved ever returned to the universities? Is the loss in those two years appreciably less than the two-year loss which the post-secondary educational system will experience as a result of the Bill before us? Finally, was there an organized effort on the part of the Official Opposition in the form of a task force, such as the one established by the New Democratic Party, to speak with young people about the problems of post-secondary education?

Mr. de Corneille: Mr. Speaker, I am not familiar with the activities of the New Democratic Party. I am not aware in detail of what it has been involved in, in terms of its tours, trips, and research. I hope the NDP will share it with the House by reporting on the matter.

I should like to deal with the more important question the Hon. Member asked. I pointed out that obviously the funds lost during the 6-and 5-, during the period of time in which we dealt with the inflation emergency, were lost for good. Since our dear friends in the NDP never govern and never have to be responsible, they enjoy the opportunity to criticize any efforts which are made to deal with economic problems, whether they are made during a Liberal or a Conservative regime. When the subject of inflation arose, I do not remember them taking any kind of responsible action in that respect or making any supporting efforts to find a program to bring down inflation. However, I have to point out that the 6-and 5-measures were successful. They were temporary, they were taken off, and we returned to the present system.

As a final comment, I am not satisfied that enough was done in the past, even though the Liberal Government made an important enough contribution to post-secondary education and showed that the federal Government had an important role to play. We do not need to do less, as was suggested by the Tories. I suggest that we need to do more. The Right Hon. Leader of the Official Opposition has shown leadership in this question, not only by throwing money at post-secondary education but by working out ways whereby we can work with the provinces to ensure that the money given to them reaches the targets, to ensure that the provinces themselves can participate, and to ensure that there is an over-all approach to the important areas of financing universities and colleges, of financing economically important research which helps business, and of pure science and the social sciences, all of which are important to the future of the country.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I must remind Hon. Members that from this point onward speeches will be limited to 10 minutes.

Ms. Lynn McDonald (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I cannot say that I am pleased to be speaking on Bill C-96 because it is a Bill which we do not want to see before the House. It attacks two absolutely essential programs in terms of