

*Government Orders*

Bill C-20 could have an effect on health care, child care, welfare benefits, income tax, grants in lieu of taxes for municipalities, grants to native people, and so on.

Farmers will be affected because crop insurance might be reduced. Graduate students will be particularly affected. These transfers may be cut, which would have an impact on services to young offenders. Legal aid programs could also be affected, as well as transportation grants to the provinces and municipalities. That especially concerns me because funding for airport operations may be particularly affected.

Charlo airport in my riding always needs funds and it cannot afford cuts.

The provisions of Bill C-20 concerning unemployment insurance clearly contradict the government's commitment to help fund this program in difficult times.

[*English*]

The bill we are examining today, this evening and probably tomorrow is a very complex one and a very technical one but it does have some very devastating impacts on all of Canada especially the regions of Canada.

Bill C-20 was introduced to implement four initiatives outlined in the February 1991 federal budget. I need not say here what Canadians think of that budget. One of the most important changes would provide amendments to the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act and federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act. It would extend the cap on Established Programs Financing, or the EPF, transfers to the provinces.

Another proposed amendment would dramatically increase unemployment insurance payments for both employees and employers. The other two components would provide for the capping of sessional allowances. There is no problem with that. There would also be a continued freeze on tax grants for the provinces collected from public utilities.

I believe sincerely that we need a strong federal presence in our health care system. I believe that to have that strong federal presence we need a strong financial commitment from the government. This Bill C-20 does

not do that. It puts the provinces in a very difficult situation. It gives them two choices. First, it can raise taxes. I can assure you right now that taxes are at their maximum limit federally and provincially so that gives them the second option of cutting services and programs. To me that is just not acceptable.

This bill is an attack on the health care system. It is also an attack on post-secondary education. So it goes far beyond withholding just EPF entitlements as a means of deterring the Canada Health Act.

It does affect education. I want to spend a few minutes if I may on the area of education. The government record on education has been mostly small talk. It has been playing public relations games by announcing nice programs and using nice choice words that sound great out there. If we look at their record we can see that the student loan program needs a complete review right across Canada. There has been no increased sums of money put into those programs since 1984. The government has turned around and levied a 3 per cent administrative tax on student loans. That is a complete shame. It is taxing people who just cannot afford it.

There is another thing I should mention as my critic's responsibility in the area of communications and culture. It is the first time that we have seen a government in the history of Canada tax learning. The Prime Minister has said in this House that we want to develop a learning culture. The government's policies speak against that by placing a GST tax on books and magazines. That is contrary to what the Prime Minister really wants. I would suspect that the Prime Minister should be reviewing some of his policies in that regard.

I want to also mention something I spoke of earlier regarding transportation. How does transportation—

[*Translation*]

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** One moment, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but I appeal to everyone's co-operation. I have difficulty hearing the speaker, and I would imagine that others have the same problem. Therefore, I ask all members to co-operate. The hon. member for Restigouche—Chaleur.