

of the lower mainland where there is access to universities, technical and vocational schools and various institutes. It costs much more to be educated if you happen to be living in the interior of British Columbia. The interior of British Columbia gets the short end of the stick in B.C.

● (2140)

The people of B.C. get the short end of the stick in Canada and Canada gets the short end of the stick internationally, so, Mr. Speaker, for some of us there is no stick left anymore. That is why we are very concerned about what Bill C-96 is doing. It is saying that we are going to be cutting back from the traditional kinds of investments which this country has made in post-secondary education and in health care.

It is interesting to see how people change their minds. The Liberals took a step in this direction when they were government. They introduced the 6-and 5-program during the time when inflation was running at a particularly high rate. They decided to cut back their contribution to post-secondary education and health care to 6 per cent and 5 per cent. This was a drastic cut.

At that time the then Finance critic for the Conservatives, who is the present Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), predicted that these cuts would result in closures of hospitals and cut-backs in post-secondary education. He went on and on about how regressive the action was, how it was a slap in the face to the people of Canada and how it was going to set back our education and health care systems many many years. Now that the Conservatives have changed sides and formed the Government of Canada, they have cut back much worse. This is not a 6-and 5-program for one or two years. These are cut-backs that, as I indicated, will result in a total of \$5.6 billion over the next five years, and on and on. It will compound. We are now seriously saying that we are not going to be investing in post-secondary education as we have in the past.

In my constituency, having spoken with the various college instructors and professors, having discussed the matter with representatives from Cariboo College, the Okanagan College, with university representatives in our area from the three major universities in British Columbia, with teachers, staff and principals of schools in the north Thompson area, the south Thompson area, Kamloops, Salmon Arm, Shuswap, Logan Lake and many other areas, they all say exactly the same thing. We cannot deliver the kind of education that people in 1986 require. We simply do not have adequate funds.

The universities make a particularly compelling case. They say that they are now having to cut back on research. The student enrolment numbers are increasing, the teaching loads are increasing and the work that professors normally would be doing in research is not being done. The same calibre of teaching is not there, and some of the best minds in Canada are saying that if this is indicative of the priorities of the Government, then it is time to take research staff, knowledge and expertise elsewhere.

Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act

That is a very regressive situation developing in the country. We will have user fees in our hospitals, cuts in college funding and cuts in education funding generally, cuts in research and development. Now the Government says it expects the private sector to make up the difference in research. Again, that might, and I say might, work to a certain extent in central Canada, the industrial heartland of Canada, but when you get into Atlantic Canada, northern Canada or western Canada and if you are expecting the corporate sector in those regions to be funding vast amounts of research, you are dreaming in Technicolor. That simply will not occur. The ability to do that, even if the will is there, is simply non-existent.

The newspapers are filled with reports over the last number of days with various corporate presidents saying they would like to participate in R and D but that it is not a priority at this time. One of the vice-presidents of Canada Aeronautics of Ottawa, when asked why would the private sector participate in university research and development, replied "You got me". He does not understand why they would be encouraged to participate in research.

Let us look carefully at what has happened regarding this Bill. When the New Democratic Party wrote to every Premier in Canada, every Minister of Health and every Minister of Education to ask how they felt about this initiative by the Government, replies came from every province except two. One was the Province of Alberta which can, in a sense, be forgiven because it was in the middle of a provincial election. The Province did have the courtesy to at least acknowledge the letters, and said it was unable to reply. The Province of British Columbia failed to acknowledge the letters and failed to reply. It is typical of the Province of British Columbia when it comes to placing a priority on health care and education. B.C. was too busy, too uninterested.

In the second to last First Minister's conference, the Premier of British Columbia was applauding the Government for the cut-backs it was making in a variety of areas and failed to speak out against cut-backs in post-secondary education and health care. Only one province, in the replies which the New Democratic Party received regarding this Bill, said it thought the idea of cutting back on education and health care as per Bill C-96 was a good idea. That was the Province of Saskatchewan. Premier Devine said that this was an appropriate step for the Government to take, to put more and more burden on the provinces, to cut back in research and in the kind of education and health care system which Canadians have been developing over the last number of years. He was the only Premier to suggest that that was an excellent idea, and he put it in writing.

Let us recognize that the overwhelming majority of people in Canada, represented by their Premiers and Ministers of Health and Education, made the representation to the Government that they felt it was an inappropriate step, that it was not the right thing to be doing with funding post-secondary education and health care. I thought this was a Government that was going to be interested in consultation, in