

were increased by 7 per cent when inflation was running at 12 per cent under his Government, or is it fairer that these payments be increased by 5 per cent when inflation is running at only 4 per cent, as provided by this Bill?

• (1630)

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, I am delighted that if I have done nothing else this afternoon, using my tongue like a blunt scalpel, I have obviously touched a nerve of at least one Conservative Member who has managed to find both his tongue and his feet.

Mr. Nunziata: And the courage.

Mr. Tobin: That is right, and the courage. I want to pay tribute to that Hon. Member for having found his tongue, his feet and his backbone all in one fell swoop. If more Hon. Members were to do that, we might be able to have a debate today rather than a continuing litany of some Hon. Members prepared to speak for Canada while others are prepared to bend to the whip of the Government opposite.

The Hon. Member asked a question which is totally warped in its approach to this problem. The Hon. Member talked about the inflation rate of the Canadian economy being 4 per cent and the rate of increase in transfer payments being 5 per cent. He was attempting to—listen to the thunder, Mr. Speaker. God has spoken. God is on the side of the people of Canada. He rumbles from above.

Ms. Copps: She.

Mr. Tobin: She rumbles from above, as the Hon. Member for Hamilton East (Ms. Copps) has said.

The Hon. Member knows full well that the rate of inflation as it relates to the cost of providing medical facilities in Canada is far above the rate of inflation in the economy. When we talk about the health and education systems, we are not talking about a series of transfer payments for welfare, we are talking about re-tooling and modernizing. We are talking about staying competitive in a vastly changing technological world. We are talking about keeping Canada relevant to the 20th century and that costs more than the rate of inflation.

The other thing I want to say is that the Hon. Member knows full well that the Government of Canada, through the Prime Minister, made a commitment to the people when the Prime Minister was seeking the tumultuous 211 seats that were delivered unto him. The commitment was not to cut back on education and health care.

Another commitment was made and that was that Canada would see a brand new day. There was going to be co-operation and consultation. The Prime Minister promised that he was going to consult, to talk, to reach a consensus and to develop compromises. He promised to talk back and forth with the provinces. He said that there would be no more confrontation. What do we have now? Every single province in Canada, regardless of its political stripe, is up in arms saying that the

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Prime Minister has not kept his word and that he is transferring the federal debt out of the federal treasury and onto the provinces.

Who created the debt? The Hon. Member supports an \$8-billion tax giveaway through the capital gains provision to Canada's wealthiest citizens, but is defending this cut made on the backs of young people, the aged and the sick. He does this with a grin on his face. This is the vicious and cruel face of Toryism that has erupted in the dying days of this Parliament. It will not work. The legacy of this Government will not be rotten tuna, it will not be Ministerial resignations and it will not be the temerity of the Prime Minister. It will be this move to destroy education and health care and it will be a sorry legacy, indeed.

Mr. Hovdebo: Mr. Speaker, I wonder if the Hon. Member would project his mind ahead a few years. If we keep on with these reductions in increases, what will be the effect on medicare and education services in Newfoundland in the long term?

Mr. Tobin: Mr. Speaker, the Government is setting up, through Bill C-96, other user-pay legislation and the abandonment of regional development policy, two Canadas, the Canada that is within throwing distance of Ottawa including Montreal and Toronto and the other Canada where everyone else lives. The Government is saying to the people of Newfoundland, Vancouver Island, Prince Rupert and Gaspé that if they want to live in the North or the regions, if they want to make their homes there and if they want to raise their children there, the Government can no longer assure them through its McDonald's market-place mentality a basic level of services with the same rights and privileges as every other Canadian. The Government is telling these people that if they want to live in the outlying regions, they shall pay a price to live there. If they want to see the best that Canada has to offer and if they want to participate in the Canadian dream, they will have to live in Toronto, Montreal or Ottawa. If they want to participate in the Canadian nightmare in the making, then they should dare to live elsewhere in Canada.

The Government may not realize it because there are too many muted voices on the back-benches coming from these regions, but the setting up of two levels of education and health care, two levels of citizenship, will tear more at the fabric of confederation which holds Canada together than anything we saw during the course of the Quebec referendum campaign. Canadians expect certain levels of services, not always in jobs, opportunity, investments or otherwise, but in basic health care and education opportunities. They expect that there shall be only one level of Canadian citizenship. This legislation tells those who have to heal themselves and those who do not to rot away because the Government is balancing the books and that is much more important than investing in young people or looking after the aged and ill.

Mr. Cyril Keeper (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, you may have noticed that I hesitated to rise because of course