

In her comments she used the word "dramatic." She said that the government has to take dramatic steps in its restraint program. Whether she realized or not, she put her finger on the nail when she said that, because those are the only kinds of cuts this government is making in its restraint program—those which are dramatic, those which evoke or stimulate an outcry or response from the people of Canada. When this kind of dramatic cut is examined carefully, it is revealed as nothing more than political grandstanding. If the government were serious about making cuts it would forget about drama and would look at the Auditor General's report. If ministers took the time to study this report, they would see the hundreds of pages of suggestions of where the efficiency of government could be improved, where improved accountability methods could save millions of dollars, if not billions.

For some strange reason, however, these recommendations appear year after year in the Auditor General's report, except that each year the circumstances are worse. The government talks about dramatic cuts in spending but seems to avoid those recommendations which would not be so dramatic but which would correct the extravagant waste of millions of dollars. I have to object to this kind of an approach with all the vigour I possess—an approach by a government that is more concerned with drama than with increasing efficiency and doing something about the excessive waste imposed by its practices and policies.

Needless to say, Mr. Speaker, we on this side of the House are not very impressed with the proposals contained in this bill. As the minister indicated, the health resources fund was established in 1966. The sum of \$500 million was set aside to assist provinces in the establishment of health training facilities and research facilities. About 25 per cent of this was to go toward research. So far, \$416 million has either been committed or already spent. The proposal in this bill as it was originally drawn would allow the federal government to welch on its commitment to the tune of \$84 million. Of that fund, three-quarters was allocated to the construction of facilities for training health professionals, acquiring research equipment, and training Canada's brilliant young people for careers in the health field.

Through its austerity program the government has decided to chop this fund. The thing that concerns me most is the method used, which again is typical of this government. It did not bother to tell the provinces in advance; it did not bother to consult with the provinces in advance but just sent a telex about five days after the intention was made public.

In order to confirm these statements, in case either of the ministers in the House should try to challenge them, I have here responses from each of the provinces about this bill. I specifically asked each province whether it had been consulted in advance of the government's intention to cut the health resources fund being made public. The New Brunswick minister replied that he was advised by the minister but not consulted.

**Miss Bégin:** New Brunswick used it up.

#### *Health Resources Fund Act*

**Mr. Yewchuk:** Nevertheless, they were not consulted.

**Miss Bégin:** There was not a penny left.

**Mr. Yewchuk:** Mr. Speaker, the fact is that none of the provinces were consulted prior to a unilateral declaration about a change in an agreement which involved the federal and all provincial governments. The minister and her predecessor, who is also in the House, may shout across to me that some of the provinces have used all their allocation, and that may be so, but nevertheless they are still parties to the agreement—

**Mr. Lalonde:** There is no agreement.

**Mr. Yewchuk:** —and if federal-provincial relations are to work then there must be consultation when federal-provincial contracts are to be broken by the federal government.

**Mr. Lalonde:** There is no contract.

**Mr. Yewchuk:** I have here a comment from British Columbia, which was not consulted prior to the announcement that the health resources fund was to be terminated. The minister in that province indicates that he communicated his displeasure to the federal minister. The Nova Scotia minister replied to my inquiry that there had been no consultation since he came to office. The Newfoundland minister indicated that his province was not consulted prior to the announcement that the program was to be terminated, and writes that their experience in this respect is similar to that of other provinces. Manitoba was informed by telex but not consulted. The same applies to Ontario—"not consulted"; Saskatchewan, "not consulted"; Alberta, "not consulted"—

**Miss Bégin:** They used all the funds.

**Mr. Yewchuk:** They did not.

**Miss Bégin:** Ontario did.

**Mr. Yewchuk:** Yes, Ontario did say they had used all their funds. Alberta did not. In any case the Ontario government was not consulted even though they had received their funds. It was still part of a federal-provincial agreement. Alberta was not consulted. Quebec was not consulted.

The minister went to great lengths to say that Quebec has not used up its funds and has not submitted any projects which were prioritized in the proper manner. If that is the case, it is all the more reason why there should have been some consultation with that government prior to the announcement of this bill. I want to ask the minister why there was no consultation with the government of Quebec prior to such an announcement. Surely she cannot say Quebec received all its funds. This seems to me to indicate that the minister had no real desire to concern herself with the reaction of the provinces. She simply decided, according to the instructions given her, perhaps by the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) or someone else, that she would do a little bit of mass media grandstanding and make this announcement without consulting the people directly involved.