

Oral Questions

Ms. Jewett:—post secondary education funding for those very institutions, universities and colleges which themselves provide the programs for all our young people?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker—

An Hon. Member: There is a distraction; take advantage of it.

Mr. Lalonde: I regret that the friend of the Leader of the Opposition could not stand what the hon. lady had to say.

I want to report first of all, that indeed there is a \$1 billion fund created for youth and job-creation for young people which will include over \$260 million of new money, as the Hon. Member has indicated, which is significant.

I also want to report to the Hon. Member that this year the provinces will be receiving \$769 million over and above what they anticipated receiving this year, and certainly over and above what I anticipated paying them this year. This amount results from adjustments to the gross national product figures made by Statistics Canada last summer.

Again, I want to stress that no provincial Minister expected to get that windfall this year. That amount represents many times the \$150 million represented by user fees and extra billing by doctors. Therefore that should allow the provinces to do away completely with extra billing and user fees in the provinces where they have these amounts.

As far as the specific point raised with regard to post-secondary education is concerned, I would like to point out to the Hon. Member that the payments for post-secondary education by the Government of Canada will be increased by 6 per cent and 5 per cent which, as a whole, represents more than many provinces will have been paying to post-secondary education themselves during the course of this year. In effect, if you take into account the population count, our transfers, for post-secondary education will be more like 7.1 per cent rather than 6 per cent. That is, I would say, more than what most provinces—

● (1430)

Mr. Nielsen: Order.

Mr. Lalonde:—are going to add to post-secondary education during the course of the year.

An Hon. Member: That is a long answer for nothing.

Ms. Jewett: Mr. Speaker, everything the Minister said is all well known to all of us here. The fact is it is this Government that has made a commitment to post-secondary education, to the very programs that our young people are going to need to help prepare them for the kind of society into which we are coming.

REQUEST FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF TASK FORCE

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, furthermore, in view of the fact that the capping of

the post-secondary education funding is itself a violation of the EPF agreements, will the Minister not only reconsider that capping, but will he and the Government, in view of the additional fact that the Throne Speech has all kinds of commissions, consultations and task forces announced, very seriously consider the creation of a task force, which would include representatives of the universities and colleges, students and faculty, as well as the two levels of government, to look at the whole problem of post-secondary education in the light of the very real crisis that our post-secondary institutions are experiencing?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, not only are we going to transfer more this year than the provinces anticipated, to the tune of \$769 million, but in the following years the provinces will be receiving in excess of \$300 million more than they anticipated receiving according to the forecasts made last spring. Therefore, the total amounts transferred to the provinces for post-secondary education and health services will be very significantly over and above what had been anticipated. This should allow them to provide more funds for post-secondary education, should allow them to do away with user fees and extra billing, should allow them to improve their health services, and should allow them to contribute more to job creation.

Some Hon. Members: Order.

Mr. Lalonde: The Hon. Member knows again that the transfers for post-secondary education are going to be higher than in effect the provinces are going to put into post-secondary education.

Mr. Nielsen: Order. We do not want a book.

Mr. Lalonde: And she knows that there is no power to force the provinces to put that money where it should go.

Ms. Jewett: Mr. Speaker, the reason there is no authority on the part of the federal Government is that it gave up that authority to say how the money would be spent.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Ms. Jewett: The federal Government gave that up years ago, and it never should have done so.

REQUEST THAT MINISTER CONSIDER PROPOSAL

Ms. Pauline Jewett (New Westminster-Coquitlam): Mr. Speaker, the Minister has not answered my second question, which was: if the Government really thinks that post-secondary education is important, and I believe it does, why does it not then, since it insists on six and five being in place during this period of hiatus, create a task force to study all the problems of post-secondary education? The Minister of Youth will not do this, unless the Minister is going to tell me that one of the functions of the new Minister of Youth is to look into post-secondary education funding. I doubt if it is. Will he