

*Government Orders*

that from now on \$7.3 billion will be cut between 1990-91 and 1994-95.

The total amount in cuts from 1986 to 1995 is \$29 billion. That is a considerable amount of money for the governments of the provinces to find. It is going to be particularly difficult for those governments of the three provinces that have been named in this particular bill, because they will find that instead of an increase in relation to the Gross National Product, they are going to have a less amount in relation to the Gross National Product.

The government's main defence of this bill has been that the Established Programs Financing will increase each year. While that is true, so will everything else. Consequently, the gap between what the provinces are able to spend on these programs and the money they will have available for these programs is going to increase. That is going to have a direct impact on health, post-secondary education, child care and poor people.

**Madam Deputy Speaker:** Resuming debate. The hon. member for New Westminster—Burnaby.

**Ms. Dawn Black (New Westminster—Burnaby):** Madam Speaker, I rise to support the amendments put forward by my colleague, the hon. member for Mission—Coquitlam.

What the amendments would do is require the Conservative government to live up to its constitutional responsibilities by consulting with the provinces prior to any changes to the Canada Assistance Plan.

Motion No. 4 requires the federal government to serve notice on the three affected provinces that it wants to change the level of federal contributions under the act. It also notes that the passage of this bill cannot be considered as notice as required by Section 8 of the Canada Assistance Plan Act.

Motion No. 8 simply delays the implementation of the bill until 1992. The provisions of Bill C-69 are such that the 5 per cent ceiling on CAP expenditures is for two years only and expires after the fiscal year 1991-92. The effect of this amendment would be to nullify the ceiling on the Canada Assistance Plan.

Whether or not the federal government can move unilaterally and change the Canada Assistance Plan is being considered by the British Columbia Court of

Appeal. No action should take place before the court decides, and all appeals are dealt with.

This government often says that it does not want to comment on any issues that are before the courts. That is often what we hear on this side of the House when we question the government on various matters that are of importance to us. It will often say that it will not comment on anything that is before the courts. New Democrats feel that the government should not move on this bill until the court case has been dealt with.

The amendments would simply delay when this bill would come into effect. The amendments would give the provinces a year's notice and a chance for some consultation over the federal government's intention to slap on spending limits.

Bill C-69 is a devastating piece of legislation. It will put a freeze on the transfer payments to the provinces for health care and for post-secondary education.

In my province of British Columbia, day after day, we already see people on long, long waiting lists for hospital care, particularly for open-heart surgery. It is tragic to read stories in the paper about these people awaiting open-heart surgery and their families, and the stress they go through knowing how critically ill a member of their family is and who cannot get into the hospital in British Columbia to get the needed health care.

As a matter of fact, we are now in the incredible situation of Canadians in British Columbia and in other provinces attempting to get the needed health care, such as heart surgery, in the United States. Canadians have prided themselves for a long time on the level of health care in this country and on the fact that Canadians, no matter what their economic status, are able to receive the health care they need. That is changing and it is changing because of the attitudes of this Conservative Government and the Social Credit Government in British Columbia of Premier Bill Vander Zalm.

We also know that the freeze on transfer payments to post-secondary education is imposing undue hardship on the students of B.C. More and more young students are finishing their degrees at university with debt loads of \$25,000 and \$30,000. Students have come and told me that they are going to have to stop attending university because of the debt load and because they are not guaranteed a well-paying job when they finish their education. They are concerned about the amount of debt