

Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act

quality educators lately, they have had no place to work and therefore have gone elsewhere for employment, quite often at salaries that are no better than ours. Many of these people are leaders in their professions who take jobs elsewhere and become citizens of another country. For every well educated leader we lose, we lose that much of our sovereignty and identity which those people give to us.

We can talk as much as we want about the economic effects of this Bill, but the fundamental issue is its psychological effect. If the young people in this country come to believe that Canadians are unwilling to give their youth a greater opportunity for quality education, the psychological effect of that will be carried forward into the next generation and the generation after that. It is a crime to allow our educational system, which has grown since the war to the point of becoming untouched by most countries in the world, to be so psychologically undermined that people believe it is not worth the investment and improvement. That is the message being given by the Government through this Bill.

Mr. Rompkey: A supplementary?

Mr. Speaker: We are ready for debate, but I will allow the Member a very brief question. There is less than a minute remaining.

Mr. Rompkey: Mr. Speaker, I appreciate the answer by the Hon. Member but will he address a further matter? I appreciate what he said about the brain drain, leadership and the fact that people are leaving the country.

If there is a cut-back in research in the sciences and engineering, surely this will not allow Canada to keep up on the leading edge of technology. Furthermore, a more serious consequence is that a reduction in research in the humanities and the social sciences surely does something to us as a nation.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I have to protect the Member's right to reply, with less than half a minute remaining.

Mr. Hovdebo: Mr. Speaker, at my own university in Saskatchewan, many of the professors at that university tell me that they have so many classes and so many students that research and writing have become secondary and they probably will not indulge in them in the next few years. That is a disaster.

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Debate.

Mr. Roland de Corneille (Eglinton—Lawrence): Mr. Speaker, as the Liberal critic for the Secretary of State, and therefore, for post-secondary education, it is my task to try to call to the Government's attention its devastating policies with respect to our colleges and universities. I have criticized Bill C-96 above all as a move by the Government to abdicate its responsibilities to the provinces, students, or whoever, concerning the future of our youth and our nation. At a time when everyone is crying out that it is imperative that we do all we can to become more competitive and productive as a nation

because of competition in the world, we find that the Government is taking us into circumstances where we must ensure that our ability to be competitive is very great, yet it is taking away our ability to compete by devastating the very underlying system which gives us that capacity to compete, namely, our educational system.

● (1740)

At every hearing we have had in committee, in terms of speeches made on behalf of the academic community of students or of those who are concerned about research, our ability to compete and the studies that have been made, the same report has been made to the Government. It is going in exactly the wrong direction. Not only is it going in the wrong direction, but it is one that is contrary to the policies that it espoused before the last election. It is contradicting its promises. It is going back on those promises. It is even breaking agreements it made with the provinces that, until March, 1987, there would be the same level of support for post-secondary education and health care. It broke that promise a year early. It is cutting back the increase to post-secondary education and to medical and hospital care down to 5 per cent, a cut of 2 per cent on what was supposed to have been added to make it possible to keep up with soaring expenses in these vital areas of our country's future.

At every stage, I have fought this Bill through the House. I have focused on the fact that it devastates the futures of our universities, our youth, our economic development. It seems to me that it is imperative that we try once again, in this very last-ditch effort, to call to the attention of the Conservative Party and to its Government in power the fact that the step it is taking now is retroactive. It is also retrograde. It is regressive. It is the three Rs, but the wrong three Rs. It is wrong for them to proceed in this way, and it is going to bring about lasting harm to our country.

I have appealed to the Government to reconsider its views because it is, in fact, going back on our young people. It has accepted policies which, for example, hold back not only on the the EPF transfers for post-secondary education, but also hold back on our young people by freezing the level of loans for our students, by cutting back on such programs as the Terry Fox Institute and the Youth Forum, by totally cutting out Katimavik, by cutting back by 40 per cent on the seats in the community colleges for training and retraining, by cutting back on the youth ministry itself, its budget, till it is simply nothing more than a PR stunt and not a ministry that has the funds or the staff to effectuate any kind of future planning and policies for our young people.

There is a whole list that I have just given, and many other things that I could have added, to show that the Government has gone backwards on its programs for youth, not forward, that it has undercut them, not helped them. Aside from devastating the programs on youth, it has also been cavalier and devastating to our programs on research. This has been almost equally serious.