

Time Allocation

effect on our health care system, on our doctors, our hospitals and our senior citizens. Every individual in Canada who requires some measure of health care will be affected by the Bill. I am astounded that the Government would use time allocation, a Draconian measure, to silence the voice of the people for further debate on an issue as important as this.

I say that I am astounded that the Government is cutting off debate. The reason I say that is that just yesterday I received a telex by special delivery, as did other Members of Parliament, from 128 of the 147 physicians practising medicine in the Province of Prince Edward Island. I will read the telex into the record today. It is addressed to me and it states:

The following list of P.E.I. physicians hereby petition our Members of Parliament, and Parliament, to give favourable consideration to the recommendations of the Canadian Medical Association related to Bill C-96;

- 1) That this legislation be restricted to a short-term basis only—and only if absolutely essential to the future economy of the country:
- 2) That the financial disadvantages to the Atlantic provinces be excluded from the provisions of this legislation, i.e. that they continue to receive increasing financial support for health care programs on the basis of the existing, established program-funding formula:

The existing formula, now in place, before the legislation changes it—

- 3) That the federal and provincial Governments immediately proceed to negotiate a formal agreement for the future financing of health care in Canada. That agreement should: (a) clearly delineate to the Canadian public the constitutional, fiscal, moral and political responsibilities of both levels of Government to finance health care and (b) provide a level of federal financial support that is inversely related to the fiscal capacity of the provinces or otherwise recognizes and compensates for the fiscal inability of some provinces to provide health services that are reasonably comparable to those of more affluent provinces.

That telex has the signatures, as I mentioned before, of 128 of the 147 practising physicians in the Province of Prince Edward Island.

The Minister of State for Finance just said, "We have had extensive and long discussions with the provinces and different groups". In other words, she said, I believe, they met six times. Well, what kind of discussions were those? When we find that the Canadian Medical Association, universities and provinces are condemning this legislation, we must wonder what kind of two-way conversation took place. It looks to me as though they went to meet with the provinces and with different organizations, and they said what they are saying by Standing Order 117; "We will talk, we will talk so long, but it will be a one-way conversation".

● (1540)

For the Government and for the Minister to stand in her place today and bring down this sort of a Draconian measure with respect to a Bill as important as this is evidence of the desperate situation in which the Government finds itself.

A couple of my colleagues and I attended some hearings in Atlantic Canada with respect to the issue of EPF. We met with hospital administrators who told us, as I am sure they will tell any other Member of Parliament who takes the time to inquire how this Bill will affect them, that they are already

overburdened. They are already underfunded in terms of meeting the real needs of health care in their areas.

We also met with student unions, groups of students who are having extreme difficulty obtaining some sort of education in the out-lying areas of this country. They are finding it extremely difficult to do so because they know that if this Bill goes through and passes, as it is, their tuition fees will increase. These people are already in areas of the country in which they are unable to obtain half-decent summer employment. Some of them in my area will not be able to find any jobs at all this year. Where will they obtain the money to go to university? It is just an impossible situation. As a result, the educational system in the country will deteriorate, and once again we will have second-class citizens in different parts of the country. That is not at all what we should be striving for in this great country of ours. There should be universal access in every part of the country to the education system.

A news release put out by doctors in Atlantic Canada spells out quite clearly that some 87 per cent of doctors in that area have petitioned their Members of Parliament not to reduce extended federal funding for health services by over \$21 million over the next five years. That is what it will cost in Prince Edward Island alone. It is also pointed out in the news release that in addition to the losses cited for P.E.I., Newfoundland stands to lose \$95 million, Nova Scotia stands to lose \$145 million, and New Brunswick will lose \$117 million. These are the very areas of the country which can least afford it.

The Minister mentioned that the Government was elected on a policy of economic renewal. We now find out what that term means. It means shifting the tax burden from Ottawa to the provinces. If the provinces are to try to keep up with any sort of a national health care system or educational system they will have to increase their taxes. That is just what the Government is trying to do. It is trying to reduce its deficit while increasing the deficit of the provinces. My constituents tell me that tax is tax, whether they pay it to the federal Government or to the provincial Government. Why should there be this extra tax burden? The Government may be able to show on paper, in a couple of years, that the deficit is decreasing, while the provincial deficits will be increasing as a result of its actions. I feel that the Government is certainly headed in the wrong direction by trying to shift a tax burden of \$8 billion over the next five years from the federal Government to the provinces. That is just not the way to go about it.

In the last election campaign we heard a great deal about co-operation, this great new co-operative spirit between the federal Government and the provinces. I guarantee Hon. Members that as a result of this Bill that co-operation will disappear. I cannot see any provincial Premier of any political stripe agreeing to this sort of Bill.

I know my time has almost run out. However, I would like to go on. I would like to be able to expand on some of my arguments as to why this Bill should not go ahead. However, under Standing Order 117 I am not permitted to speak at any