

*Government Orders*

Now the total enrolment I would think is of the order of 12,000 or 13,000 plus, and many others in evening and part-time studies. Many thousands of people go to that university and get undergraduate degrees, graduate degrees, doctorate degrees in many disciplines.

Many of those people came from humble origins. By humble I mean economically not terribly prosperous. But they were able to go to university and get their education because of a number of programs, including the Canada Student Loan Program. They had come to rely on it as a stepping stone. If you check the rate of payback of Canada student loans in Newfoundland as opposed to other parts of Canada, you will find that there is no high delinquency rate. They are good payers of loans once they get the income with which to pay those loans.

The point I make in response to my friend from Windsor—St. Clair is that in the area of post-secondary education, nowhere is the curse of this government more apparent, more in evidence than it is in the way it has stunted opportunities for university education in Newfoundland.

Only this past weekend I was with a couple of people, would-be students, who told me that they are not able to go to university. One of the reasons they are not able is because this government, for all its tampering with Canada student loans, has not raised the floor. My friend from the Magdalen Islands will know this. It has not raised the base amount that a student may apply for since 1984.

• (1630)

Inflation in those eight years alone has done things to his students, his constituents. Why is he not lobbying for them? Why does he not beat some sense into the Prime Minister and tell him that eight years of inflation have eroded the buying power of those students who would like to go to university, but they have to do their borrowing on the basis of 1984 figures. That is shameful. He knows that and I am sure he will want to talk about it and dissociate himself from it when he gets up to speak.

**Mr. Howard McCurdy (Windsor—St. Clair):** As a previous speaker indicated, it must be of some embarrassment to the members on the other side that in Bill C-60 they have produced another opportunity to talk about what this government has done with respect to transfer payments to the provinces, in particular, those payments

that go to the provinces for the benefit of post-secondary education and medicare.

Basically, the bill could be described in some respects as housekeeping. It deals with the fact that it is now necessary to extend the present fiscal arrangements with respect to established programs funding, more specifically to provide for changes in the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act so that the present legislation will apply to 1994.

It will also provide for administrative arrangements that would allow the provincial governments to collect taxes on behalf of the federal government and for the federal government to collect taxes on behalf of the provincial governments and make provisions for taxpayers who have paid through one or the other to have those payments taken into account by those respective governments.

It also would provide that this present ceiling on the EPF payments would be based on the 1992-1993 fiscal year rather than the 1987-88 fiscal year.

Now, of course, one of the elements of this bill that may pass unnoticed is the fact that it is necessary to extend the present transfer payments for post-secondary education and health because of the fact that the government has failed to negotiate new arrangements under EPF.

This was something that was supposed to have been completed last year. It is an issue that has been the subject of debate in this House on numerous occasions since 1984. You will know, Mr. Speaker, that there was considerable concern about the erosion of contributions to the provinces as well as some concern about the relative responsibilities of the provincial governments and the federal government with respect to post-secondary education.

The issue is not drawn so sharply with respect to medicare, but we will come to that later.

The fact of the matter is there was a problem out there that we should identify with respect to the responsibility of the provinces. That is, there was concern that the provinces were not making their due contribution. We asked over and over again that there be, first of all, a real negotiation of EPF to provide for stipulated transfer payments for post-secondary education and that there