

Government Orders

Ms. Clancy: Mr. Speaker, it is with a certain amount of mournful feeling that I reply to the hon. member from Portage—Interlake. Even the devil can quote Scripture.

It has been, shall we say, an activity of the federal government to constantly bring up the figures and say: "Look, we are giving you x number more dollars than we gave you last year". Perhaps if I explain this very slowly, my hon. friend will catch my drift.

What has happened with the universities in Nova Scotia and with health care are not just raises in inflation. I am sure everyone of us would hope that universities are not static institutions. Neither are health care institutions. Things grow, they increase, they attempt to improve and costs rise. Even without those changes in the development of programs larger number of students, et cetera, which have outstripped the inflation rate and the rate of increase to the province of Nova Scotia, you also have long-term capital costs which are not figured into the statistics that my hon. colleague represents.

The Sir Charles Tupper Building in Halifax, which is the home of Dalhousie Medical School, has major problems requiring major renovations. The magnificent fund-raising effort that went forward from the university and helped to build the fire-devastated Dalhousie Law School, which is now finished, also has ongoing problems. There are hundreds of people going in and out of buildings every day. There are repairs, there are up-keeps, all of which are not figured into the calculations.

On top of that, we have the whole question of increases over inflation *vis-à-vis* increases due to actual costs. In general, the rising costs of universities outside these other points I have mentioned also outstrip inflationary levels.

I would like to know, given that the hon. member comes from one of the western provinces which receives transfer payments, if the government of Manitoba is equally happy with the cuts in these particular areas. My hon. colleague from Winnipeg says no.

As to my argument with the premier of Nova Scotia, my party in Nova Scotia is doing everything it can with the greatest of alacrity to change the government in

Nova Scotia and the problems will be significantly less under a new government.

• (1240)

When that happens there will be more voices added to mine, my colleague from South West Nova and the other four Liberal MPs from Nova Scotia who stand and vociferously defend our position and attack the position of the government with regard to the cuts to Established Programs Financing. My hon. colleague will hear those voices loud and clear for many years to come. A grand tradition not just of education, not just of health care, but equally of liberalism is re-established in an absolutely impressive way in the province of Nova Scotia to join the other Atlantic provinces of New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Prince Edward Island.

Mr. Felix Holtmann (Portage—Interlake): Mr. Speaker, just before I present some ideas with respect to what I think is a very important piece of legislation, I want to say to my colleague, who was making more of a political speech, that I was trying to debate some straight facts.

The numbers were not reduced. We did not cut back the numbers transferred to her province. They went up, and in the particular EPF area, although not as high as the hon. member would have liked, they went from \$680 million to \$684 million. That is not a cutback. That is exactly the opposite. It is an increase.

Members opposite cannot chide the fact that these figures are correct. It should not be suggested to anybody in this country that when you go up \$4 million it is a cutback. No fancy words will change that.

In this of second reading debate of Bill C-60, which amends the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act, let me say that I find this bill to be very promising. I know there is some scepticism by members opposite but I would like to explain what it proposes to do.

Mr. Milliken: A bunch of broken promises.

Mr. Holtmann: It involves the renewal by this government of the equalization program which earlier addresses from all sides of the House correctly recognized as the cornerstone of the Canadian fiscal federalism.