

hospitals are increasing due to our aging population and while costs are going up as a result of inflation year after year, the operating grants to hospitals, universities and colleges are decreasing. This is very serious.

I have raised this matter in public meetings in my constituency, as I am sure have other Parliamentarians. I can honestly say that the public is shocked when told that the Government of Canada believes it is now appropriate to reduce expenditures on post-secondary education and health care. People simply do not believe that. They believe I have my facts wrong, that I must not be telling the reality of the situation. I then produce a copy of Bill C-96 which shows that the traditional contributions to the provinces are being reduced by \$5.6 billion over the next five years. In the Province of British Columbia people are shaking their heads in disbelief at the provincial government reducing opportunities for our human resources to be educated and trained to maximize talents and expertise. Now they find that the Government in Ottawa plans to do the same thing with grants for post-secondary education and health care. They find that unbelievable.

I would like to say in conclusion that this move by the Government is, in a sense, very biased against certain Canadians. It contains a geographic as well as an income bias. Those people who come from middle and low-income families will find it even more difficult to pursue post-secondary education and obtain appropriate health care. If you live in an area of Canada which does not have a post-secondary education institution nearby to enable you to commute from home, the additional cost will be prohibitive. It is now an impossibility for growing numbers, particularly those in the outlying regions of Canada, to pursue their studies. For that reason I encourage the Government at the eleventh hour to reconsider Bill C-96 and stop it in its tracks before it goes any further.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Are there any questions or comments? There being no questions or comments, I will recognize the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry (Mr. Axworthy) on debate.

Mr. Nickerson: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I was under the assumption that you would normally go from one side of the House to the other. There are several government speakers this afternoon and perhaps you would be kind enough to recognize—

Mr. Gauthier: That's not a point of order.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): I do not consider that to be a point of order. I did not see the Hon. Member rising. He has to be pretty fast on his feet if he wants me to recognize him.

Mr. Nickerson: It's just that I am so far away.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Order, please. I would be delighted to listen to the Hon. Member for Western Arctic (Mr. Nickerson). I have recognized the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry. If the Hon. Member wants to speak

Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act

after the Hon. Member for Winnipeg—Fort Garry has spoken, I would be glad to recognize him.

Mr. Guilbault (Saint-Jacques): And we will be pleased to listen to him.

Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Winnipeg—Fort Garry): Mr. Speaker, that just proves the assertion we have made all along, that members of the Government simply are not quick enough to keep up with the Opposition.

The debate we are engaged in is probably the most important debate that has been conducted in this House all year. It goes to very vital issues which affect the lives of everyone: the quality of our education and the quality of our health care. It is very important that in this debate everyone attempt to deal with the issues in a clear and cohesive way, and with the proper information.

I want to draw the attention of the House to comments made by a Conservative Member of Parliament from the Province of Manitoba, the Member for St. Boniface (Mr. Duguay). In committee hearings on Bill C-96, which took place on Monday, June 9, the Member for St. Boniface was accusing the Government of Manitoba, which appeared that day, of engaging in the worst and biggest piece of disinformation since the days of Tokyo Rose, a person who I presume was in operation before the Member for St. Boniface was within range of conscious hearing.

I make the case that if the Member for St. Boniface was a little more interested in serving the interests of the people of Manitoba and less in acting as a flack for the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), he would not have engaged in a very serious and inexcusable development of information that was not accurate, thereby twisting and distorting the case which was being made.

The Member for St. Boniface was trying to make the case that the present provisions of Bill C-96 were more than generous, that they would be of great help and assistance to those people who want quality health care and education in the Province of Manitoba, and that it was one of the most fair and equitable measures which could be instituted. He cited some figures which indicated that during the period from 1979 to 1985 there was only a 7 per cent increase in funding under the Established Programs Financing and a 50 per cent increase in inflation. Those are not the facts. That is simply not the case. In fact, for that period of time the funding under the Established Programs Financing increased 106 per cent and the rate of inflation was only 80 per cent. There was a net 26 per cent increase in federal funding for education and health care. This totally and completely refutes the facts alleged by the Member for St. Boniface.

Why are members of the Government so intent on distorting? The reason is in part that they know that this Bill is a clear contradiction of a commitment which was made by the present Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) in August of 1983 when he promised all the provinces a fair share of funding for