

same priority as the defence of the nation." He said that in many senses, the two are very alike and should be treated that way. I believe it is true that the defence of the medicare system in Canada is similar to the defence of the nation. I think the federal Conservative Government has forgotten that.

Let us turn to the effects of Bill C-96 on post-secondary education in Newfoundland. I quote as follows from an article in the *Evening Telegram* on August 24, 1985:

Memorial University is experiencing both budget restraint and rising enrolment. The result may be limitations on enrolment this year. Last year it dealt with the problem by having classes until 10 pm. Despite these financial problems the university actually received a 6.5 per cent increase this year—well above most provincial programs.

Leslie Harris, President of Memorial University of Newfoundland, said that the federal Government's plan to reduce transfer payments is an "Extremely short-sighted approach to reduce the deficit."

Another article in the *Evening Telegram* on December 19, 1985 states:

Memorial University has withheld \$2 million from faculty and staff pensions to permit it to balance its books to the end of the year.

As a result of the multiplier effect of these cut-backs, Memorial University had to resort to the pension fund of the faculty.

We see the same Draconian impact on each of the Atlantic provinces as a result of Bill C-96. Why does the Tory Government not go to its friends in order to reduce the deficit? Why are all the taxes in various tax schemes forgone and left untouched? The Government cuts the deficit on the backs of ordinary Canadians while giving a lifetime capital gains tax exemption of \$500,000. If the Government wants to cut the deficit, it should look to those people who live off the hog in this country and do not pay their fair share of taxes.

The Government should attack unemployment in this country if it is sincere about cutting the deficit. I have said many times in the past that if the Government could reduce unemployment by 1 per cent a year, it could reduce the deficit by \$2 billion. Yet the Government does not have a concentrated plan to reduce unemployment in this country. It only knows how to cut the deficit on the backs of working Canadians. It is shameful that the Government has chosen the least defensive people in Atlantic Canada and put the boots to them through Bill C-96.

Ms. Sheila Copps (Hamilton East): Mr. Speaker, I am also interested in joining in this debate because I believe these transfer payment cut-backs affect every Canadian who must take advantage of our national health scheme. It also touches every single Canadian who aspires to a post-secondary education. Something which has made us unique as a country is the fact that notwithstanding other countries such as the United States which has developed a private sector health care plan, we have adopted a national health scheme which has permitted every single Canadian man and woman to take advantage of the services of health care when he or she needs it

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at little or no cost to the recipient. We know at the moment that the primary users of our health care system tend to be our elderly, in particular, our elderly women who live below the poverty line. What the Government is doing with its cut-backs, without any consultation with the provinces, without any of the promised discussion which the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) heralded when he came to office with his huge majority, is imposing a responsibility on the provinces to cut back in areas of post-secondary education and health.

• (1550)

We have already seen the results of the pressure put upon provincial Governments by the federal Government as the result of these cut-backs. Essentially, what the Government is doing is transferring its deficit to the provinces. Notwithstanding the comments made by the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) when he said: "We are going to come to grips with the deficit. We are the bottom line. The buck stops here", we know that is absolutely not the case because the Minister of Finance, without talking to a single province, in private discussions which we know he taped and then forgot to tell the Province of Manitoba he was taping, made a unilateral decision, along with his Government, to cut the very life-blood of our post-secondary education and health care programs.

In the Province of Ontario, because of that same pressure with respect to its health care system, negotiations are currently going on between the provincial Government of Ontario and the Ontario Medical Association. We hear and read in the newspapers that the OMA is calling on its friends in the federal Government to move in on the question of the ban on extra billing, even though we know that Hon. Members of that same federal Government, when they were in opposition, supported an all-party request for a ban on extra billing. The Hon. Member for Brampton—Georgetown (Mr. McDermid) is shaking his head. The Hon. Member for Brampton—Georgetown, if he wishes to say otherwise, should set the record straight. It is my belief and understanding, and the record will show, that the Canada Health Act was supported unanimously by all three Parties.

The Conservative Government's commitment to health care is simply not what it pretends to be. A case in point is the Province of British Columbia. Over the last number of months we have seen the Province of British Columbia ignore the question of accessibility with respect to the Canada Health Act by limiting the number of persons who can practise in that province through the Government administered plan. What that does indirectly is to say to the people of British Columbia who live in small towns and isolated communities: "You will not have access to the same kind of first-class quality medical care as will other Canadians".

Unfortunately, we have not heard a peep from the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) on this very important issue. He has remained strangely silent. We hear the Minister defending cut-backs in family allowances and reductions in the amounts which will be made available to