

consultation had begun for Canada. Everything would be done with as much consultation as possible. The provinces would be asked to provide input for any Bill that would affect them. We were led to believe that before 1984, everything had been done in an utterly disorganized fashion and that there had never been any consultation at all.

In this context of consultation, Mr. Speaker, this new era in which we were going to talk to and understand each other and work together as friends, perhaps we should consider and reflect on what is being said in the various provinces, and I am of course going to start with my own province, New Brunswick. What are they saying about this Bill in New Brunswick? At this point, perhaps I may mention a debate that took place in the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick. Listen to this. Mr. McKenna moved a motion, and you will say, of course he wanted to change the Bill, as the Leader of the Opposition, the Liberal Leader in the province of New Brunswick—indeed, and quite a leader he is, Mr. Speaker—and the motion was adopted unanimously by the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick.

Mr. Speaker, I shall if I may read you the text of this motion:

[English]

WHEREAS the Government of Canada has announced that the rate of growth in transfer payments under the Established Programs Financing Act will be decreased commencing in 1986; and

WHEREAS this reduction in the rate of growth will cost New Brunswick \$9 million this year and will total an estimated \$160 million by 1990-91; and

WHEREAS New Brunswick does not have the economic base to absorb such a loss;

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick requests the Government of Canada to reconsider its unilateral decision and restore the Established Programs Financing to the level agreed to in 1982; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislative Assembly of New Brunswick request the Government of Canada to enter into discussions with the Provinces in an effort to mutually agree to the level of funding under the Established Programs Financing Act for 1987-88 and beyond; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that should any reduction in the rate of growth of funding under the Established Programs Financing Act be agreed to that the federal government take steps through the equalization program to compensate the Atlantic Provinces for such EPF losses, and ensure that the equalization program provide sufficient revenues so that all provinces have the ability to provide comparable levels of public services at comparable levels of taxation.

[Translation]

So this was the conclusion at the end of the debate held in the New Brunswick Legislative Assembly, and the word which sticks out in this text is "unilateral": "The unilateral decision of the Government of Canada to change its programs." That, Mr. Speaker, flies in the face of every statement made by the new Government when it took office.

The people of New Brunswick are very disappointed. Very disappointed. They even say they have been misled because the people of New Brunswick wanted to believe in this new era of consultation. They had faith. But, Mr. Speaker, I must tell you that the people of New Brunswick are seriously pondering over

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what has happened and what is happening. They are seriously reflecting upon these events. They are very disappointed.

And New Brunswick is not the only province with does not take kindly to this Bill. Manitoba as well is saying:

• (1410)

[English]

The Government of Manitoba believes that passage of this Bill would lead Canada in the wrong directions. Bill C-96 suggests that Canadians should devote a declining share of our economy to health and higher education services at a time when all forecasts show that needs are clearly increasing and evidence suggests that our country can afford to maintain and improve our services;

[Translation]

So when the provinces make statements such as this one, it does look as though the Canadian Government does not believe it shares any kind of responsibility for health care and post-secondary education, or at least that it would like Canadians to think that its responsibility has diminished.

I could go on reading the comments made by the Province of Manitoba, but I will refer instead to the Province of Ontario and quote Premier David Peterson of Ontario:

This reduction in funds provided the provinces will translate into a reduction in services. There will be fewer hospital beds, warned the Premier of Ontario, David Peterson, who also thinks that in 1990, his province will lose 75,000 places in its colleges and universities.

And I could go on with Gérard D. Lévesque, the Quebec Minister of Finance, who says:

[English]

It is unfair to the provinces, because they have been counting on the amounts agreed to in the accords.

[Translation]

And we have the Premier of the Province of New Brunswick, a staunch supporter of the Conservative Government here in Ottawa. Nevertheless, Mr. Hatfield said:

I will have no choice but to increase user fees for medical services.

And his Minister of Finance, Mr. John Baxter, went on to say:

[English]

It is unreasonable for the federal Government to think that provinces which have taken difficult measures to deal with their own financial situation can also be expected to absorb part of the problem at the federal level.

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, those were a few of the reactions we are getting from the provinces, who are very disappointed in the fact that this action was taken unilaterally, without any consultation and without the provinces knowing when and how these funds were going to be cut.

Mr. Speaker, I could go on to quote other Canadians who are also disappointed, and I would like to mention what was said by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada:

[English]

An article in *The Globe and Mail* reads: