

Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act

about it? The Conservative Party is saying that it will provide the money for whatever the provinces want to do, but the federal Government will have nothing to say about national goals. What about a federal co-ordinating role? What about strategic research done in the universities? Does the Minister of State for Science and Technology feel that the federal Government has something to say about areas of strategic research? What about strategic manpower? He talks about that in his speeches. What about speaking up on this particular Bill? Why cut the debate as the Government is trying to do?

Why are government Members not participating in this debate today? What is the matter with Conservative Members? Are they all a bunch of sheep? They are saying that they ask no questions when they give the money to the provinces. There is no national interest in higher education. They just hand the money over and forget about the problems of our universities.

What does the federal Government expect from our universities? Whom do we ask? Do we ask the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) or the Minister of State for Science and Technology? Does the Member for Capilano (Mrs. Collins) or the Member for Brampton—Georgetown (Mr. McDermid) have anything to say about this? What does the federal Government expect when it turns over money for post-secondary education? Does the federal Government have any goals? Why not simply give the provinces the tax points? Why should we act as a tax collector for the provinces? The federal Government is saying that it has no policies or ideas. Therefore, just give the provinces the tax points.

Mr. Benjamin: It won't work. They'll chisel on it.

Mr. Berger: They are being chiseled on it now and have nothing to say about it. Should the federal Government convene a meeting to discuss these subjects? Should it get the private sector involved?

In my speech last week I quoted from a recent submission made by the President of Northern Telecom. Northern Telecom happens to be our only multinational in the telecommunications industry. David Vice, the President of Northern Telecom, said that instead of a "dynamic, well-supported system of education, with recognizable centres of excellence" in this country we have "crumbling structures, inordinately high student-faculty ratios and poorly-equipped laboratories". He said:

The emergence in Canada of distinguished research and teaching centres—comparable to Harvard, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, or Stanford—seems next to impossible.

He called for a reordering of priorities. He called upon the Prime Minister to spend more money on education and less on other areas. He called upon the Government to convene a national conference on the crisis in higher education and to work to develop a national policy.

The Government has no national policy. It is washing its hands and is saying that it has nothing to say about the crisis in higher education. It does not recognize the call from people

like David Vice of Northern Telecom. What in heaven's name is the federal position? The answer is very clear from the silence from the Tory benches. There is no position. We cut our deficit, we cut loose, and the hell with what goes on in our universities. That is what the Conservative Party has to say. That is what it is telling students, young people, and university faculties and administrators.

Mr. Les Benjamin (Regina West): Mr. Speaker, I want to deal first with some remarks made earlier today by the Hon. Member for Fundy—Royal (Mr. Corbett).

Mr. Nickerson: It was a great speech.

Mr. Benjamin: I hear it called "a great speech". I wish the predecessor of the Hon. Member for Fundy—Royal, the Hon. Gordon Fairweather, were in the House. He would not hold still for this for one moment. He is presently the head of the Human Rights Commission in Canada, an excellent appointment. He was in the forefront of the Conservative Party for years with regard to federal funding for health services and post-secondary education. It is a bit ironic that the present Member would make a speech about the deficit and the private sector in health care.

I would like to quote another very famous Canadian who is also a Conservative, the Hon. Mr. Justice Emmett Hall. In a speech he made in Winnipeg on April 3 he said:

With privatization will come drastically increased costs particularly in the hospital field. Canada now allocates 8.4 per cent of the GNP to all forms of health care. In the United States where privatization flourishes, it is 10.9 per cent for vastly inferior coverage.

He gives an example. In the United States a recent Blue Cross-Blue Shield individual plan was offered for \$1,840 per year. The coverage details included \$100 deductible, 80 per cent of physician fees and 50 per cent of psychiatrist fees covered, no coverage for physical therapy, routine physical examinations, or baby care. Most absurd of all, there was no coverage for treatment of any illness which was present but latent prior to the effect of the insurance. What about cancer and heart disease? They are often present, latent for years. They are among the most costly to treat. That is your privatization, your private sector health care.

There are countless examples of Canadians who travelled and became seriously ill in another country, particularly the United States, who were faced with bills of tens of thousands of dollars. After their province had paid the fees and bills which it would have paid had they become sick at home, they are still faced with the additional cost of tens of thousands of dollars. The Hon. Member for Fundy—Royal advocates that kind of nonsense.

• (1240)

Let me appeal to the Conservatives about things which seem to satisfy them. They talk about the bottom line, the crassest kind of term. That seems to be what the Conservatives, with their so-called sound business principles and practices, are impressed by. Let me then appeal to them on the basis of free