

equally important, and that is the issue of unemployment insurance.

As one of the previous intervenors mentioned, during the election campaign the Member for St. John East indicated: "No one is planning any changes in the Unemployment Insurance Program. There haven't been any changes proposed". At that time that may have been true. That is just like the Government stating that it would not be cutting funding for regional development, or stating that it was going to keep full funding for the Atlantic Agency. All those things were true at one moment in time. It is like the statement of Richard Nixon when he was President: "They are no longer operative". It may have been true on Wednesday, not true Thursday, and may not be true on Friday. That is the problem.

The Government ran an election campaign and stated that it was going to do certain things to help Atlantic Canada, in the same manner as it stated the same things to the other regions of the country. Yet, right after the election in the first Budget, those programs disappear, or the financing is drastically reduced, or the Government refuses to renegotiate existing federal-provincial agreements.

Exactly the same situation exists with regard to unemployment insurance. We were told that our Unemployment Insurance Program was not going to be affected by free trade. We were told that we were going to help those people who were unemployed, and this is especially important in Atlantic Canada. However, what does the Government do? Even before the Budget, it becomes obvious that the Government is conducting a major restructuring of the Unemployment Insurance Program to deny benefits to many Canadians. Now, as a result of the Budget, the federal Government is also being taken out of any funding role or unemployment insurance. That role has existed for years.

The Government is saying that the employers and employees have to pay for a program which will not meet their needs. However, the federal Government still wants to be able to control the funding and be able to deny the program to many Canadians, but at the same time it wants to be the piper that does not pay. It wants to give the direction, deny people programs, and deny benefits to certain regions of the country, but it does not

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want to make any financial contribution to the program. Again, in Atlantic Canada, as the Premier of Nova Scotia stated, it could be a real threat to the social security budgets of the provinces. That is what he stated when describing this program.

Another area that concerned me with regard to the Budget is the further reduction in the federal Government's commitment to Established Programs Financing. This is not the first time that the Conservative Government has cut the level of financing for universities, community colleges, and hospitals. It has been done before. The Government is following a precedent that was set by the previous Liberal Government when the MacEachen and Lalonde Budgets reduced the level of funding.

While the federal Government talks in terms of reducing its commitment, fighting the deficit, or stating that it is still contributing more than it did the previous year, the Government knows that what it is actually doing is reducing its role and commitment to health care and post-secondary education. Each time the Government does that, it means that there will be fewer young women and young men going to universities or community colleges. It means that hospital beds will be closed in various provinces. It means that there will be another operation postponed. In all likelihood, it means that there will be more deaths because the hospital beds were not there, the operations could not be performed, the nurses were not being trained, the doctors were not being trained, and the facilities may indeed be closed, even although in some cases they are already built.

The other day I spoke to Kathleen Connors, President of the National Federation of Nurses Unions in Canada. She pointed out that in each province people tend to think that the health problems are strictly a provincial crisis. In the Province of Manitoba they would say if the provincial Government would do more we would not have to close those hospital beds. In Nova Scotia, they would say there would be more nurses if the provincial Government would put more money into Medicare. One would hear the same comments in Prince Edward Island.

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The basic reason for these situations is not because the provinces are not committed but because federal governments in the last 15 years have continued to reduce their