

*Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act*

growth in the economy, that is how payments to the provinces from the Government will be reflected." There was the assumption that with this kind of block funding, as it is termed, there would still be a matching of 50-50. If the federal Government increased its funds to the provinces, naturally the provinces would increase their contribution to assist and develop the health care system and post-secondary education system that Canadians needed and deserved. That has not happened.

If we just look at some recent statistics, for example 1982-83, the funding intended for universities in British Columbia from the federal Government was \$206 million. In 1984 that amount was increased to \$236 million, an increase of about \$30 million over two years. That was money intended for universities only. The assumption was that the Government in British Columbia would match that increase and pass it along to the universities. I am sad to say that that was not the case. The total provided by the province to the three universities actually fell in that interval from \$316 million to \$299 million.

While federal grants to universities across the country were actually increasing year by year as a result of the formula determined in 1977, some provinces, including British Columbia, were renegeing in their contributions. Today we find, as many many groups have now brought to our attention as parliamentarians, that the federal Government pays totally for all post-secondary education in B.C.. In other words, if you look at all of the money spent in the Province of British Columbia on post-secondary education, you will find that that is equal to the amount of money which the federal Government contributes alone. We can say that in spite of the fact that education and health care is a provincial responsibility by the Constitution of Canada, the federal Government finds itself in a situation where it is providing all of the funding to post-secondary education and most of the funding to health care in the Province of B.C. The same thing exists in other provinces, but not to the same degree. British Columbia is the worst offender.

This is not the only difficulty that we have in the Province of British Columbia. As far as young people participating in education beyond the secondary school level, going to colleges, universities, technical schools or institutes of one kind or another, are concerned, we have the lowest rate of anywhere in Canada. Fewer people per capita in the Province of B.C. go on to post-secondary studies than in any other area of Canada. Considering the complexity of the world as we know it, the rapidly changing world and workforce, the fact that British Columbians are not being trained and educated as are people in other provinces at the post-secondary level causes many of us much concern.

British Columbia also has the notoriety of being the only province that has an all debt student aid program in Canada. When you look at the various aid programs provinces have for students, B.C. is the worst of all in Canada. Not only do we have fewer students participating in post-secondary institutions, we have less support system to enable them to do so. For

an average person it costs \$6,000 on an annual basis to send an individual on to further education and training.

Bill C-96 reduces the amount of money that traditionally would go to our post-secondary education and health care systems by \$5.6 billion over the next five years. That is a cut of \$5,600 million over the next five years. British Columbia alone will have a cut of \$650 million. What alternatives does that leave a province like British Columbia? It can increase its deficit by \$650 million. That is one thing; simply pass this incredible debt burden along to the province and the people of British Columbia and put them further and further into debt. Another alternative is to increase taxes at the provincial level in British Columbia to make up the \$650 million shortfall. Or we can cut services. Any of these options causes all kinds of problems. The last alternative is likely the one the Social Credit Government of B.C. will follow. The provincial Government is anti-education, anti-intellectual and in many cases anti-people. Consequently the first reaction of that Government will be to cut services. As a Member of Parliament from British Columbia, that alarms me considerably.

Over the last few years we have seen the public school education system destroyed in British Columbia. I could recount untold examples of the reduced levels of educational opportunities young people in B.C. are now experiencing. For example, science is a rapidly changing field, yet there are many classrooms where four and five students have to share a textbook published 15 or 20 years ago which does not reflect the realities of the scientific world today. There are considerable needs for young people with special learning problems, yet learning assistance teachers and various support groups and classes have all been cut from the budgets. At the other end of the spectrum where you have groups of gifted and talented students who should be nurtured and encouraged into new and creative areas to develop their talents to the maximum, programs of that kind have essentially disappeared. We could go on and on, Mr. Speaker. We have literally seen the life snuffed out of our educational system.

Similarly with health care. When you go into our emergency wards the first thing you see is a big sign on the door saying you have to pay a fee to have a broken arm or a racked up shoulder attended to. You have to come up and pay a user fee to get into a hospital in British Columbia. I cannot imagine the intolerable situation further cuts will create right across Canada but especially in the Province of B.C. where people have already been so hard pressed in the area of education.

● (1520)

With regard to operating grants for universities in my province, in 1972 the provincial government expenditure was about 6 per cent. The last figures we have are for 1980-84. At that time the expenditure was down to just over 3 per cent. Over that period of time we saw a decrease in support for our universities. At the same time student enrolments are skyrocketing. I have all sorts of graphs and charts which indicate that while enrolments are going up, while the number of patients in