

Supply

● (2140)

There is another area which concerns us, Mr. Speaker. We have recently discussed the federal-provincial fiscal arrangements, but where do we see a province telling its people, for example, that a certain amount of those expenditures come from the Government of Canada? In 1980-81 the federal government transferred to the province of Ontario 66.7 per cent of its hospital insurance costs, 58.9 per cent of medicare and 35.4 per cent of health care. During the same year the Government of Canada paid almost 62 per cent of post-secondary school education, including part of the cost of grade 13, and various amounts for research projects as well as the academic costs. In some universities in the U.S. the tuition is several times higher than here, but do we as the federal government get the credit for the contributions made when they are administered by the province? Not at all. The federal government pays half the premium for crop insurance and the farmer pays the other half, but it is administered and advertised as a provincial program. These are the reasons we have to communicate with the people of Canada. If we have to be accountable for our expenditures, then we certainly have to advise where those expenditures are being made.

In 1980 the federal government paid \$219 million to the provinces in the community services contribution program, and these were joint funding programs with the municipalities, the provinces, and the federal government all contributing. But the federal contribution is seldom recognized by either of the two levels of government. Then, of course, under the Canada Assistance Plan the Government of Canada pays 50 per cent of the total cost of the program. In fact, the federal share of total tax expenditures has decreased from 52 per cent in 1959 to 33 per cent in 1979. If people are complaining that their taxes are too high, they should be advised where the increase has taken place. These are the areas of information which are always ignored by the opposition and the provinces. Canadians deserve to know, and if we are to be honest with the electorate, surely they should know, the amount of the federal contribution to their welfare, education and communities.

Between 75 per cent and 80 per cent of government advertising, Mr. Speaker, is educational. Very recently one of the commodity groups in Canada was assisted in an advertising program to assist their particular product which was in trouble because of poor markets and low producer prices. Should we not promote the tourism industry in Canada as we have in the past? These are government advertising programs to advise the people not only of Canada but in other nations of the world about the diversity of options we offer for tourism. Certainly this is one of our highest earners of foreign exchange—

Mr. McDermid: We have a deficit in that, too.

Mr. Ferguson: It is one of our highest earners of foreign exchange. Perhaps if some of the hon. members opposite would take holidays at home instead of going to Africa or some other exotic place, we would not have such deficits. It is a lack of understanding which has created confusion in the minds of

citizens in some parts of Canada, and certainly we as a government have to keep the people advised because we simply cannot leave it to the opposition.

I have to reflect back to the constitutional debate and some of the letters we received about property rights. They instilled fear in the hearts of Canadians that they would no longer have property rights under the Constitution. They did not tell them that property rights come under provincial jurisdiction; they did not tell them that the only property rights we can guarantee are those in the Arctic, the Yukon, or the Northwest Territories. This is a vital area of concern as far as I am concerned, and that problem is still surfacing in western Canada. The people out there are under the impression that they have no property rights, and that was one of the main issues in a local byelection held not long ago.

Another fact I should draw to the attention of the House is that not long ago one of the members of the opposition mischievously interpreted a bill in a way which struck fear in the hearts of all the churches. As a matter of fact he sent a copy of that letter to many of the churches across Canada, and even sent along a suggested letter of reply which they could send to their local Member of Parliament. That letter read into the bill several things which, if the bill were taken in its total context, there would be nothing to fear, but if you pulled out a clause here, one somewhere else, and another one later on in the bill, and took them all as single clauses that are not interrelated, then, yes, perhaps there would be cause for concern. According to this letter the churches could not remove a person even if they had bylaws protecting them. This is the type of mischievous political red herring which has been coming from across the way, and we cannot accept this in the society we have in Canada today. So if we are spending taxpayers' money in advertising and communications—

Mr. McDermid: Your deputy House leader agrees with us.

Mr. Ferguson: —it is a situation created by the opposition. They have forced us to do this, to set the record straight, and this we intend to do.

Mr. McDermid: Ask his brother who is a preacher in London.

Mr. Ferguson: Mr. Speaker, I have a letter from the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs (Mr. Ouellet) explaining what I have just pointed out, that if these things are taken out of context, perhaps you could read into them something which is not there and was never intended to be there. However, this bill has not even received second reading, or come before the committee, and already they are striking fear into the hearts of the Canadian people, using as a weapon the very principles upon which this nation was founded relating to the supremacy of God and—

Mr. McDermid: You took long enough to put it into the Constitution.

Mr. Ferguson: It makes me very sad, Mr. Speaker, to see this type of propaganda coming out.

Mr. Pepin: Very sad, indeed.