

cent to 18.4 per cent. Statistics Canada predicts that it will fall to 17.4 per cent in 1986. The federal-provincial task force on student assistance, when it released its report in 1981, indicated that one out of every five people surveyed who did not attend post-secondary education did not attend because they lacked the finances to do so. In that period of time we have seen that the amount of money flowing into the social affairs envelope has decreased in proportion to the increases in other envelopes. For example, in 1980 the social affairs increase was only 9.4 per cent, while social envelope expenditures increased by some 14 per cent. Indeed, the financial arrangements made in 1977 forced the provinces to start cutting back. There have been cutbacks in education and in health. Obviously hon. members opposite are not happy. They want more cutbacks and they will stick it to us all.

At the time there was another wonderful promise by the Prime Minister which the country learned to accept with a grain of salt. As reported on page 1992 of *Hansard* for December 14, 1976, the Prime Minister said that the federal government would intervene at some stage down the road to correct a deteriorating situation if such should develop. Of course, there was the assurance of 1976, but he shrugs, "Who remembers 1976? That was a long time ago." That is the philosophy of the Prime Minister.

I should like to deal with one other aspect about which federal Liberals should be disturbed. It concerns the present arrangements and deals with their lack of visibility. They are afraid that they are being ignored or that no one appreciates their good works. I have suggested in my constituency before that there was a simple solution. If the university in Regina could maintain its present funding by erecting a billboard indicating that so much money for its great edifice was donated by whatever minister was in office at the time, I am sure it would do so. If our poor friends across the way want a little recognition and a security blanket in the form of a billboard in front of a university to make certain that all students and passers-by know and appreciate the great contributions that they have made, then I am quite prepared to support that proposal. But at least I say to them stop the cutbacks, stop the nonsense. If hon. members over there want a billboard, we will give them a billboard, in neon if need be, with flashing lights or even a statue of the honourable minister. We will put up statues to all ministers as though they were great Roman emperors! But I say for heaven's sake, stop the cutbacks; stop the nonsense; stop the insanity.

• (1620)

I would like to place on the record the concern of and prediction made by the Premier of Saskatchewan, the hon. Allan Blakeney, when he suggested that moving toward block funding might create some problems for federal politicians regarding visibility and accountability. He stated the following:

Through shared-cost programs, the federal government—in fact, all Members of Parliament—retain a direct involvement in, and identification with, the

provision of health, post-secondary education and social services. We welcome that involvement.

We want Members of Parliament—from Saskatchewan, from all across Canada—to maintain a vigorous and direct interest in these programs. And we want Canadians generally to know of this interest and involvement.

... In this imperfect world, it is not easy to imagine a federal politician rallying support for these programs through a passionate advocacy of equalized tax point transfers.

I think the premier at the time properly predicted the problems with block funding, that there was not going to be an accountability for federal politicians, that there was not going to be a visibility for federal politicians. That is what they wanted. That is what they got. If they are unhappy with that situation, they should go to the conference table and do some decent negotiating, rather than acting unilaterally like the king before the tides, demanding the tides not come in. Surely that is not the way in which this country should operate and be run.

I want to turn my attention now to the field of education. In the report of the parliamentary Task Force on Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements the importance of education and the turmoil which the educational facilities in this country are going through is described, and on page 121 of this report we find the following:

It is clear to the task force that the Canadian post-secondary education sector is in a period of difficult adjustment. Furthermore, much of the evidence we heard suggests that this painful process of accommodation to rapid change will be protracted. We therefore see our role as suggesting how the two orders of government might co-operate more closely to facilitate provincial and institutional responses to change.

A co-ordinated response would help to ensure a post-secondary sector adequate to the needs of a vast, regionally-diverse country in a highly competitive economic environment, and adequate also to serve the intellectual and spiritual aspirations of individuals in a bilingual and multicultural society.

That report is pure wisdom compared to what has been coming from the benches opposite.

Is there any recognition by the action of this government of the state of our educational institutions in Canada? Is there any recognition of the role they should be playing?

**Mr. Blaikie:** They want to turn them all into community colleges.

**Mr. de Jong:** I suspect what my colleague has just said is right, that this government wants to turn the educational institutions into community colleges or technical institutions. I will come to that a little later.

**Mr. Blaikie:** Philosophy is dead in the Liberal Party.

**Mr. de Jong:** It has been predicted as a result of government studies that we are going to be experiencing major shortages in skilled manpower in this country, that it might be difficult for us to obtain even the modest goal of 1.5 per cent of our gross national product going into research and development because we might be lacking trained and skilled manpower needed to accomplish that goal.

One tends to think a government that commissions such a report would go out of its way to make certain that the university institutions are capable of educating the trained people that will be needed in the years ahead. But that is not happening. The government instead is unilaterally cutting the means