

*Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act*

budgetary cutbacks, resulting in subscriptions to specialized magazines not being renewed, so that students are not even aware of new developments in their own areas of expertise. Some teaching positions have been eliminated, and then hiring was frozen. A whole generation of scholars do not find employment in the current university system, while the students enrollment continues to grow.

The new reductions imposed by Bill C-96 are, in my opinion, outright unacceptable, because they were supposed to take effect on April 1, 1987, and not on April 1, 1986.

The brief submitted by the Association of Canadian Community Colleges to the Senate Standing Committee on National Finance emphasized the importance of investing wisely to maintain or even improve Canada's competitiveness in the academic field.

I remind the House that there are currently over two million Canadian men and women who attend community colleges and who are certainly privileged, as far as postsecondary education in Canada is concerned.

Community colleges certainly do not agree with universities when the time comes to talk about financing, for they all seek the lion's share; however, if there is one point on which they all agree, it is about the need to continue investing in postsecondary education. It is urgent to invest in hi-tech industries to meet international competition head on.

Mr. Speaker, Bill C-96 runs in the face of the Conservatives' election promises. As a matter of fact, at a meeting of the Quebec Conservative caucus held on July 1984, the following proposal was adopted: To respect the federal obligation to finance health care in the provinces pursuant to established programs financing and, on an equal basis, provide the provinces with additional funds to establish or improve such programs as are recognized by a national conference of Ministers of Health and health care professionals as being the most likely to improve the general health of Canadians and reduce the costs of the system in the long term.

Throughout the election campaign the Progressive Conservative Party did not hesitate to criticize the 6-and-5 program, yet today not only does it reduce federal transfer payments but it does so one year ahead of time.

I would like to say how Quebec Finance Minister Gérard D. Lévesque reacted to the reduction in equalization payments. He stated that most provinces had acted with much discipline and moderation with respect to the control of expenditures, and he urged Ottawa to look in its own backyard and see to what extent it might cut down its own expenditures.

I would also like to tell the House how some pressure groups have reacted. Earlier I mentioned the Association of Canadian Community Colleges, I will now refer to the Canadian Association of University Teachers, the Canadian Medical Society, and the Canadian Chamber of Commerce.

• (1910)

[English]

Dr. Donald Savage, President of the Canadian Association of University Teachers, said that the consequence of Bill C-96 will be poorer quality education and a decline in laboratories and libraries. He said that Queens University library is rated eighty-fifth among North American universities and McGill is fifty-ninth. He thinks that the consequence is that good people are beginning to leave.

[Translation]

Furthermore, according to Dr. Savage, such a measure would mean cut backs 20 times the reductions imposed by the Liberals and opposed by the Conservatives at the time.

I heard one of my colleagues say that the present Government had created a number of jobs since September 1984. He even mentioned the figure of 600,000 jobs. I would like to elaborate on this figure. When they mention creating 600,000 jobs, I would like to point out that most of these jobs are part-time jobs that do not provide social benefits in proportion to the number of hours worked. The Hon. Member also pointed out that many jobs were created for women.

I agree some jobs were created for women, but today, the Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald) is in trouble because the programs set up specifically for women in non-traditional occupations were cut as of April 1986, without prior notice. As a result, all women who were hired several months before and were expecting to get training were sent home. There was also a special program for women working in the home who wanted to re-enter the labour market. All these programs were cut, and today, a women who has worked at home for years no longer has a chance to train for a new career.

I therefore think that those are two important problems which the Conservative Government has been unable to solve. When we look at Bill C-62 on equity employment, we realize that those are fine words, but it is quite difficult to implement such a bill, since there is no penalty for those who will ignore the legislation. I should like to be more specific since we are now talking about the number of jobs created by the Conservative Government, but the statistics should be more complete and more accurate.

[English]

According to the Canadian Medical Association, this federal funding change will result in an ever-increasing two-tiered health care system, one for those living in rich provinces and another one for those living in provinces with a lower fiscal capacity.

Furthermore, the President of the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, Mr. Roger Hamel, urged the federal Government to spend more on universities. He said that the business community is increasingly concerned that the squeeze on post-secondary education funding will make it impossible for