

*Government Orders*

there to teach and to do research, but because the money is drying up, where do they go? They go to the United States.

I can understand some people on the other side of the House who would say, yes, because in the United States the money comes from the private sector and from big business, et cetera. That is their tradition. It is also a country with a population of 250 million plus. We on the other hand are in a country of—I have not heard the latest census statistics—but we are somewhere in the area of 27 million.

It is just utterly unrealistic, not to say foolish, to think that we could possibly compete in the development of private donations to research and development, particularly within the university context in the same manner. It is not possible. We do not have the population base.

It therefore is incumbent upon the government to do the best it can to ensure that the standards of education, research, development and the physical plants where this is carried out at least maintain a level of acceptance.

Let me talk about those physical plants for a minute too. Last fall, I was invited to a meeting by the students of Dalhousie University on this very tuition hike that Bill C-60 is making necessary.

I walked into the student union building, two blocks from my house, and the lobby of the student union building was filled with concerned and frightened young people.

One young woman got up and told the assembled group that she was in a 100-level class as a freshman at Dalhousie University in a classroom that was built for 50 people. There were 150 students crowded into that room. It was a fire hazard and it continues to be a fire hazard. Because of the cutbacks epitomized by Bill C-60, our universities are being forced to educate our children in rooms that are unsafe. That is merely a small example of what is going on.

Surely we are not so blind in this Chamber as to see what we are doing to ourselves by refusing to grant the kind of money that universities need to succeed, that they need to make Canada or keep Canada on the competitive edge in this globalized economy.

Are we really that blind not to understand that if we are going to take our rightful place as competitors in world markets we can only do this with young people

trained and educated and ready to take on the kinds of jobs that will be necessary to keep us there?

There is a second aspect to this bill and that is the health contributions aspect. This is something that we all have to be very careful and very serious about.

If there is a jewel in our social service network in this country that jewel is medicare. If there is something that truly makes this country different, more compassionate, more caring and indeed more of a desirable place to live for its citizens and more of an example in the international community, it is medicare.

Medicare has been with us for 27 years. It is something that all Canadians, everyone of us, no matter what your political stripe, take as a benefit of absolutely amazing proportions. There is not a person in this House who cannot tell a horror story of what happened to either a member of his or her own family or to someone they knew in the days before medicare.

I recall one evening shortly after I came to this Chamber having dinner with two of my colleagues from two other parts of the country. Each one of us had a family story in the pre-medicare days of how illness or accident had caused tremendous financial hardship because of the cost of medical services before Canada brought in medicare under the great Allan J. MacEachen of the other place.

We cannot allow for the erosion of medical services. I have just come back from a visit to Washington with the Sub-Committee on the Status of Women. I have listened to Americans in the field of health care talk about that system. We hear the figure that there are 36 million Americans not covered by some form of medical insurance. When we were in Washington last week, we learned that figure was incorrect. In fact, the number is closer to 96 million.

• (1230 )

There are 96 million people who are either not covered or not covered enough for medical care in the United States, the land of the free and the home of the brave. I was really glad last week to realize that I lived in a country that would not allow that to happen.

This is a very precious gift we have and we must be very careful and jealously guard the existence and the continuation of our medicare system. There is no question that costs are escalating in the area of medicare and that we must be very careful to watch those costs.