

Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act

—if Ottawa goes ahead with the reduction in grants it simply will emasculate the post-secondary education system. It is going to be chaos and chaotic. Regardless of whose numbers you are going to use, the system is simply going to fall apart.

Mr. Donahoe is a Minister in the Government of the Province of Nova Scotia and he is talking about the educational system of Nova Scotia. He is worried about one of the finest systems of education in Canada. These are not idle words. We should listen to the professors, the people who are running Dalhousie University and the people involved, whether it be students or faculty. We should listen to the CBC about the state of affairs at Dalhousie and we will understand why the Minister from Nova Scotia is talking not through his hat, but from his heart and knowledge as a Minister of the Crown of that province as to what will be the results of this Bill.

For the sake of the people of that province, if for no one else, I urge the Government to reconsider this Bill and not to try to muzzle us.

Mr. Neil Young (Beaches): Mr. Speaker, my remarks will be very brief. As I understand, the main argument of members of the Government is that the \$5 billion cut from the Established Programs Financing Act over the next five years is not a cut at all but in fact an increase. For the life of me, I cannot understand how on earth they can call a \$5 billion reduction in transfer payments for medicare and post-secondary education from the federal Government to the provinces as an increase. It does not only escape logic, it does not jibe with the promises made by the Progressive Conservative Party to the Canadian people during the 1984 election campaign. What the Progressive Conservative Party said in its Campaign Handbook with respect to established programs financing was, and I quote:

We would return to the 1977 funding formula though we cannot compensate the provinces for their 6-and 5-funding losses. We will institute regular consultation with the provinces as set out in the original agreement to reach a consensus on national goals in post-secondary education.

As we know now, Mr. Speaker, the Government did not consult with the provinces and certainly did not follow through on the promises it made during the election campaign, not only with respect to this program but with respect to a whole host of other programs.

I can only find one individual during this whole debate who has referred to the cuts as "cuts". The Hon. Member for the Western Arctic (Mr. Nickerson) quite forthrightly and honestly said, and I quote from *Hansard* of May 6, at page 12978:

It is always difficult to stand up in the House of Commons or anywhere else and defend cuts in health services.

So he is one member of the Government who recognizes that the Government is attacking the ability of the provinces to fulfil their commitments to medicare programs and post-secondary education. In the process, the Government will hurt an awful lot of Canadians who should have the right to equal access to medicare whether they live in Newfoundland, Labrador, British Columbia or anywhere else in the country. Rather than having one standard of health care services apply to all Canadians equally, Canadians will receive different

health care services depending in which part of the country they live in and on the ability of their particular province to deliver that health care service. Exactly the same thing will happen to the youth of this country, many of whom will be denied access to higher education simply because they cannot afford it. That is contrary to every principle which has been discussed in our country for many years. Access to quality education and health care is basic to our form of democracy.

I know my colleague, the Hon. Member for Cape Breton—East Richmond (Mr. Dingwall), has other pressing demands on his time, as we all do, so I will end my remarks to allow him to speak. To conclude I will simply say that what the Government is doing is the height of hypocrisy for which it will pay in the next election.

Mr. Dave Dingwall (Cape Breton—East Richmond): Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague, the Hon. Member for Beaches (Mr. Young) who, as usual, has displayed a great deal of knowledge on the subject matter we are debating. What is more important, I agree wholeheartedly with the substance of his remarks. I must say that this is quite remarkable in view of some of the positions which have been taken by other members of his caucus.

Bill C-96, an Act to amend the Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Federal Post-Secondary Education and Health Contributions Act, is very important. It is very important in the way in which the Government operates. It is important in the way in which the Government treats its various provinces and, in particular, the people who reside in those provinces.

● (1630)

I would like to ask the following question. Is this an open Government? The question has to be answered in the negative. In dealing with a piece of legislation as important as Bill C-96 one would have hoped that the Government would see fit not to invoke the provisions of closure but, perhaps, to allow a full and open debate on the effects this negative piece of legislation will have on the provinces. Unfortunately, that was not the choice of the Government. Its choice was to close debate by using the most Draconian measure Parliament has seen in many years, that is, closure.

I can see by your facial expression that you too, Mr. Speaker, are disappointed with the way in which members of the Government have conducted themselves with regard to the provisions of open government. Open government and stability are certainly not a part of this Government's actions in terms of Bill C-96.

The thrust of the Bill before us is to take away from the provinces monies earmarked for necessities. I refer to the necessities of health care and the necessities which our post-secondary institutions provide. The Government is attempting day by day to transfer the deficit of the nation to the provinces. It is not fair that the provinces are now being told that