

Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act

For the information of Canadians who are listening, I would like to break down these figures by province. In Newfoundland, in 1986-87: \$7.3 million less; in 1987-88: \$15.5 million less; in 1988-89: \$24.8 million less; in 1989-90: \$35 million; in 1990-91: \$46 million; in 1991-92: \$58.9 million, which by 1992 adds up to a total of \$187 million, and this for a province with a high unemployment rate, where young people are discouraged because they cannot find jobs. And the Government wants to cut back spending on education, which accounts for about 27 or 28 per cent of total federal transfer payments to the provinces! The remaining percentage, 70 or 75 per cent, goes to health services. I will get back to this later.

Mr. Speaker, the story goes on. Prince Edward Island, in 1986-87: \$1.6 million; in 1987-88: \$3.4 million; in 1988-89: \$5.4 million; in 1989-90: \$7.6 million; in 1990-91: \$10 million and finally, in 1991-92: \$12.7 million, adding up to a total of \$40.8 million. Our smallest province, the one that needs help most, is going to lose \$40 million in revenue over the next six years.

Mr. Speaker, I could on and talk about Nova Scotia, which will be losing \$282.6 million. New Brunswick: \$228.8 million. Quebec: \$2,083.6 billion. Ontario, my own province: \$2,929.9 billion, nearly 3 billion dollars. Manitoba: \$340.4 over six years. Saskatchewan: \$332.5 million over six years. Alberta: \$773.1 million and British Columbia: \$934.3 million over six years, adding up to a total of \$8,133.8 billion lost in two vital areas under their jurisdiction, namely education and health care, areas which the federal Government has for years been helping to finance by redistributing the financial burden, since everybody in Canada is helping to pay for those who have less, and it was this program of transfers to the provinces, in cash payments or tax points, that helped to restore a form of equity and justice to this country, by providing a system that gave Canadians access to education and health care on a universal, fair and equitable basis.

Mr. Speaker, in today's mail I found a press release from the Secretary of State (Mr. Bouchard) concerning a three-pronged study he commissioned: first, access to post-secondary education in Canada; second, the 1983-84 national survey on post-secondary students to examine such issues as interprovincial mobility, the specific characteristics of full- and part-time students, interest in Canadian studies and access to education in one's chosen official language, and on and on; and third, the 1984 national survey on 1982 graduates which made it possible to collect statistics on graduate students' experiences during their first two years on the labour market, etc.

Mr. Speaker, a glance at this document indicates that the study of the Secretary of State was made public last May 2, and I urge Hon. Members to read it because it is rather thought-provoking. Here are some of the issues reviewed. I cannot list them all because my time is limited, but I think it does raise important questions: policies concerning foreign students; the expansion of TV educational programs; the impact of new communication technologies on better access to education; the opinions and positions of teachers' and students'

associations and Governments with respect to accessibility. Accessibility is the key word because we want Canadians to be better educated and prepared to assume their rightful role in the economy. Therefore, a collective willingness and a common movement are required to help finance post-secondary institutions.

So now we have this heartless Government which does not want to share any responsibility for education and which has been axing right and left in the appropriations earmarked for the provinces. As if this were not enough, the Government now wants to gag the Opposition and put a procedural end to the debate because it has grown tired of listening to speeches on issues like education and health care.

Well, Mr. Speaker, we intend to go on speaking at length to these issues because we have documents which we feel should be made public. We have lots of things to say, Mr. Speaker, and I am sure you understand this is not a delaying tactic or a filibuster on our part. We are interested in this matter and it is only natural that we would want to debate it in the House. Indeed, this is where the work must be done.

Mr. Speaker—

• (1120)

[English]

I would like to talk about the effect of this legislation. The Government says we are preoccupied with the deficit; we are. In its papers the Government is saying it is trying to reduce the deficit. One way is by cutting federal-provincial agreements, thereby transferring the deficit to the provinces. We all know the Government acted unilaterally, without the consent of the provinces, and has failed to respect the tradition of federal-provincial agreements. We thought the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) said during the campaign that he would have continuous ongoing consultations with the provinces in federal-provincial conferences. Yet on the most important issue, that dealing with transfer payments for education and health, he did not. The Government did not have the sense, the heart, or even the decency to go to the provinces and say, "You expected this money but we are sorry, we are going to have to cut the deficit and we have to ask you to bear the load". This is contrary to government claims and also contrary to government promises.

Nevertheless, during the last election the Conservatives promised to respect the EPF agreements on health care and increase R and D budgets. We know what has happened. They have no intention and have shown absolutely no initiative toward increasing R and D budgets. They sure as heck have not kept their promise on the transfer payments and EPF agreements.

All provinces are opposed to these cut-backs. Several groups, including the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, which is not known to be a very strong supporter of the Liberals, have opposed these cut-backs on the basis that they are unjust. The Conservatives opposed similar cuts in 1982 on the 6-and 5-