

Government Orders

this government. That is our aim from this side of the floor and that will continue to be the fact.

In any provincial political agenda it may be the wish to say: "Take more from Ottawa, give it to the provinces, and let us look after it". This is why we have the two years till March 31, 1994 when our provincial ministers of finance, our Prime Minister of Canada and our premiers of the provinces can get together and look at the tax base and at all money spent being spent wisely and for the benefit of all Canadians, including those who pay their taxes.

Mr. Sergio Marchi (York West): Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise on behalf of our caucus and constituents from York West to speak to Bill C-60. It talks about the equalization and transfer payments to the provinces, which essentially help them to look after their jurisdictions under the Constitution of our country on behalf of that same single taxpayer.

The debate today specifically touched on the whole question of transfer payments as they relate to education, post-secondary education and training. I think it would be highly valuable not only to look at Bill C-60 from a narrow perspective. We should in fact take a look at what the general government track record has been in terms of keeping up with its payments to the provinces.

If we look back a number of years, certainly last year with the introduction of the GST, inflation was not at 2 per cent, not at 3 per cent, not at 4 per cent, but was upward of 5 per cent. The transfer payments were much less than the growth of both the GNP and the rate of inflation. That was the case for a number of years consecutively.

The Prime Minister, the Minister of Industry, Science and Technology, and the Minister for International Trade talk about making Canadians and Canada competitive again and about a prosperity agenda. They talk about ridding our country of illiteracy. They talk about keeping Canada apace with a world that is certainly moving quickly and does not owe us a free lunch or dinner or breakfast.

What does that mean? It means that there is a gulf of difference between the rhetoric and the words put on paper that our Prime Minister tries to inspire the country

with at whatever stop or before whatever audience. It means that there is a gulf of difference between that and the substance or the fact that when it comes time to pay and give over transfer payments for post-secondary education it is not there.

We are unlike certain parts of western Europe where there is an equilibrium between the number of applicants applying for post-secondary education, largely university, and the number of people accepted. In large measure they are equal because a greater pool of Europeans go through college and through training apprenticeship programs for electricians and tool and die makers than in this country.

We have talked today about Canadians not being able to afford to go to university. The fact or the reality is that the universities and post-secondary institutions of our country cannot even afford to have the spaces. Never mind if people can afford it; they do not have the spaces to come close to responding to the demand of young people wishing to enter university. That is related directly to the budgets of those universities for expansion, for facility space, and for professors. That is also related in practical measure to the debate we are now having on the floor of the House of Commons.

We are saying quite simply that if the Government of Canada wishes to equip its young with an education to meet not only their aspirations but the aspirations of a country, if we are to train individual Canadians both young and old, those whose employment was terminated at age 50 because a plant closed, moved to Buffalo or it costs a peso to construct widgets in Mexico and ship them back for the same kind of profit, if it means that we are going to give those people a place to stand, then it means that the Government of Canada will have to match its words with dollars.

Unfortunately the dollars have not matched the flowery images of the rhetoric. A few minutes ago a member on the government side asked if Bill C-60 enables Canadians to trust this government with fiscal arrangements. I say no. We are two weeks after the presentation of a federal budget and I am asking if Canadians trust this government more to take care of and look after their interests on a fiscal budgetary playing field.