

In closing, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that we in the NDP are unquestionably going to oppose this legislation simply because it is not in the best interests of Canada, and it is especially not in the best interests of our young people.

Mr. Herb Breau (Gloucester): Mr. Speaker, I am very happy to take part in this debate. At first I had not intended to speak because this seemed to me like a very simple piece of legislation.

Mr. Riis: It is very simple.

Mr. Blackburn: Written by a simpleton.

Mr. Breau: The provinces have steadfastly refused to come to any agreement on national objectives for post-secondary education. The provinces are responsible for post-secondary education and they do absolutely nothing to make sure that the economic needs of this country are going to be met in the future.

There are some extreme examples of this lack of national objectives and of a mechanism for making sure that our tax dollars go to train and educate young people in order to meet the economic needs of Canada's future. One of the examples, Mr. Speaker, is that within 10 years this country will have to go elsewhere and encourage forestry engineers to come here. We are going to have to immigrate forestry engineers. The education system in Canada is not meeting the economic needs of the country. It is very funny to hear the Member for Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis) say on the one hand that he is condemning his provincial government because it is not passing along all of the money it gets from the federal Government to post-secondary education, and then on the other hand he says he wants the federal Government to give them more. Either the Hon. Member is being very mischievous in his debating style or he does not understand how fiscal arrangements work.

● (1140)

In terms of post-secondary education, Members should realize that unfortunately the money we are giving the provinces for post-secondary education is totally unconditional. It is a very frustrating thing for all federal parliamentarians to realize. No one in this Parliament is accountable to the Canadian taxpayer for moneys which we raise from them and transfer to the provinces for post-secondary education. No one has a clue where the money goes.

An Hon. Member: You used to.

Mr. Breau: No, Sir, there were never any conditions put on post-secondary education funding.

Mr. Blackburn: You screwed up when you went to block funding.

Mr. Breau: Because of the financial position of the Government of Canada, the discretionary expenditures of the Government are being held at six and five, and in some cases lower

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than that. All federal employees have been put under six and five. All those who come under federal labour laws come under six and five. Most of the provinces have put on restraint programs tougher than six and five. In terms of the transfers to them we are saying that we are going to limit them, for post-secondary education only, to six and five. Mr. Speaker, they are not transferring six and five to the institutions.

Mr. Blackburn: Tell them they have to.

Mr. Breau: Oh, tell them they have to. How naive can the Member for Brant (Mr. Blackburn) be? I went through this in 1981.

Mr. Blackburn: What is your Health Minister doing now?

Mr. Breau: This is health.

Mr. Blackburn: Oh, same thing?

Mr. Breau: Health is health and post-secondary education is post-secondary education. The Member who is now sitting in the chair, and some other Members of this House who were on the parliamentary task force on fiscal arrangements in 1981, learned from former Premiers, present Ministers and present officials in the provinces that when it comes to education the federal Government is not even entitled, according to the ideology of federal-provincial relationships in this country, to ask where they are putting the money. Some provinces will not even answer federal Ministers as to where they put the money in education. It is a very sensitive thing in this country which we have to learn to live with. To suggest that the Parliament of Canada can, through some legal mechanism, order the provinces to put the money where we would like, is not to understand the history, tradition and evolution of federal-provincial fiscal federalism in this country.

Ms. Jewett: That is not true.

Mr. Breau: It is one of the things that we have to recognize.

The Member for Carleton-Charlotte (Mr. McCain) put some figures on the record and said we are being very tough on New Brunswick. Let me show what has happened in terms of New Brunswick. Members may not realize that in 1981-82 the institutional expenditures in New Brunswick, which includes everything after high school, every technical school and community college, average yearly increases from 1977-78 to 1981-82 9.8 per cent. That is the money they got partly from students, partly from private donations and partly from the provincial government. The increase in the federal contribution was, on a yearly average, 18.4 per cent, which is just about double. The average rate of growth of the provincial government's expenditure was 11.2 per cent. The federal contribution was 18.4 per cent. The federal share of post-secondary education expenditures in New Brunswick went from 93.8 per cent in 1977-78 to 107 per cent in 1981-82. The Government of New Brunswick is making a 7 per cent profit on the transfer of post-secondary education from the Government of Canada to the Province of New Brunswick. In post-secondary