

Health Resources Fund Act

time who wanted support but who criticized that concept as being naive. They felt that that concept would lead to disappointment because that was not the way research worked.

There is no question that money must be involved, but what is basically needed is the right idea or a breakthrough in very sophisticated and complex scientific knowledge. One example which is often cited is in relation to my own area. At the University of Toronto Medical School two famous Canadians, Banting and Best, discovered insulin back in the 1930s. That was perhaps one of Canada's most outstanding medical discoveries, if not the most outstanding. However, it is thrown in with all the other examples, usually to indicate a need for support for medical research. However, the example itself exemplifies just the opposite. In that case a couple of devoted researchers, without any support at all—they were just allowed the use of a laboratory—and using their own funds, one summer produced a great result. That was one example of research without government or any other support.

This bill is not a major bill but it deals with an important matter. Its subject matter relates to government spending and government restraint. There are three lessons in point. One is that we have limited programs which are designed to be limited in terms of time and effects. In this case this program has almost satisfied its objectives. This matter is not far removed from the concept of sunset laws which have been suggested by many people, including some hon. members opposite.

• (1632)

The second point is the federal-provincial jurisdiction and responsibilities. As I mentioned before, this area should, strictly speaking, be under provincial jurisdiction. It is one area where, for the usual Canadian reasons, such as differences between provinces, temporary problems and so on, the federal government has stepped in to give support to the provinces. The provinces are usually anxious to have the feds out of their business—this is a very hot current subject. This matter is strictly under their jurisdiction and they should take it over and take responsibility for it. Of course, this matter is being resolved at present at the very important federal-provincial conferences on the constitution and on the economy.

The third point is with regard to the restraint programs in general. It involves all governments, as well as all parties, which will have to co-operate on this, despite debating techniques. There is always the question of where and how to get agreement on this. The provinces in particular are always pressing the federal government to cut back. Ironically, the greatest problem for the federal government in its spending program is the amount of federal transfer to the provinces, the amount of money the federal government returns to the provinces, according to our good colleague, the former president of the Treasury Board, now President of the Board of Economic Development Ministers (Mr. Andras).

How do we resolve the problem of waste? It will have to be taken care of by good, tight, improved management. The

[Mr. Philbrook.]

information which is brought out in the Auditor General's report is useful, but it is not the entire answer to this problem.

I should like to say in conclusion that although I think a cutback such as proposed in this bill, or any other type of restraint, always hurts, and there is no question that we will always be inclined to oppose it because expansion is much more fun—that is what we had for 20 or 30 years—unfortunately it is necessary at present. There is a conflict for all of us after all these good years, but obviously this bill is necessary. I believe it was undertaken responsibly by the Minister of National Health and Welfare. The best we can hope for is that that type of action, although necessary, will be temporary as our economic restraint programs begin to pay off and a healthy, expanding economy begins to allow more support in this field.

Mr. Gordon Ritchie (Dauphin): Mr. Speaker, it is with considerable interest that I rise to speak on this bill. Perhaps it is somewhat sad to have to speak about a program, which was of considerable value, being phased out. In retrospect, it seems obvious that it is really a return to the 1960s when there was a vast push by the federal government to inflict on the provinces a heavy burden in the comprehensive health care system, over provincial objections in many cases. The principle of universality was thrust on the provinces, a move which will now have to be limited. We recognize now that these plans cannot be continued. I should like to say to my friend, the hon. member for Yorkton-Melville (Mr. Nystrom), speaking of the record in the province of Manitoba, that in the last 13 months 12,000 new jobs have been created, almost as many as the government of Mr. Schreyer created in the last three years.

Speaking of the health resource fund, it seemed like one of the better ones in that it trained people in the health professions or in occupations associated with the health professions, and in conducting research in the health field. Now that the fund is being wiped out by the federal government, the tab will have to be picked up by the provincial taxpayer or the programs will have to be deleted altogether.

It is unfortunate that the type of programs financed by this fund will fall short, and that any research program that was started in the previous three years will be wasted in view of the fact that programs are based on a five-year period. In fact, most of the programs which are in the mill, so to speak, will be of little value. Furthermore, education and research, have been the most promising fields for governments so far as health return is concerned, because the education of professionals in the area of health has brought a return over many years.

I should like to say that when the Fathers of Confederation designated the provinces to care for the health, welfare and education of their citizens, they chose very wisely. The strains on confederation in the last ten years can be directly attributed to the move of the federal government into the tax field through income tax in order to finance the federal government's incursion into health, welfare and education, areas which rightly belong to the provinces. Previous Liberal administrations have inflicted on our citizens grandiose health plans which we find we cannot now sustain. The federal