

*Federal Transfers to Provinces*

of manpower training, that there should be consultation in relation to goals for future higher education and that in particular the council of ministers of education report annually to Parliament about transfers and the appropriateness of federal support programs.

What has happened is that the federal government had some leverage and has now decided that its leverage is not important at all. The federal government has elected to forgo any leverage it had with respect to education and health care. How did that happen? The federal government has taken \$1 billion this year from what it would normally have transferred in cash to the provinces. The federal government has decided to cut that back. In so doing it has made it virtually impossible for any of the recommendations of the task force concerning monitoring and splitting block funds into two separate blocks, one for education and one for health care, to be carried out. There can be no monitoring of any federal influence on how educational programs or medical care programs can best be worked out for Canada as a whole. The federal government has abandoned all that completely. When the minister takes this money away, he in effect hangs the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) out to dry. Perhaps she should be held out to dry.

I want to refer to some questions asked of the Minister of National Health and Welfare by my friend, the hon. member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill (Mr. Blaikie) who is here today. As recorded at page 14610 of *Hansard* for February 3, in answer to the hon. member's question, the minister said:

Other than that, the member should know, because I think I stated it a few times in answers to him, that we are planning the first of a series of conferences on renewing medicare, at which time I will put to my provincial colleagues the new rules of the game to strengthen medicare. He knows this is not a simple black and white matter where we can suddenly withhold payment and slow down services. I do not see how that would help people who have health problems.

It is true that we are manoeuvring around these various roadblocks—

One of the roadblocks she was talking about is quite clear now. That roadblock happens to be the Minister of Finance. The Minister of National Health and Welfare huffs and puffs, hems and haws and talks about the great things she is going to do in acting on the Hall commission report. She says she is upset about things like balanced billing and extra billing. She says she is all worked up about extra charges in hospitals. She goes about the country talking this way, but she is actually nothing more than a pussycat with no power whatsoever. She has no control or clout. She might as well resign. If the minister thinks she will have any power at all in terms of reviving, improving and changing medicare, she should not worry; if she has been upsetting some members of the medical profession who are opting out, they need not worry because she has no control. She has lost all the control in the cabinet she had; she is down the drain.

According to the same issue of *Hansard* to which I previously referred, the minister went on to say that the cost to her department would be increased in the coming five years by an average of 13.4 per cent. The minister's mathematics are rather strange. This year the amount of money passing from her department to medical care and medical concerns is decreased by 8 per cent. She says there will be a 13.4 per cent

increase. The dear minister cannot add or subtract. In view of this bill, I suggest her only recourse is to hand in her resignation. That would be the responsible thing to do. But I am not so sure she will do that. She has already indicated that she does not think that the budget is too good, but she still stays on. Here again she has shown to the House and to the nation her incompetence. She cannot add or subtract, she cannot figure out a percentage. When we see transfers for medical concerns reduced by 8 per cent a year and she says they are going up 13.4 per cent, we know that this minister is finished politically and is without clout.

• (1700)

Mr. Speaker, it is not just that minister that is finished. The former premier of the province of Nova Scotia, that brave province, is now the Secretary of State (Mr. Regan). He claimed, in answer to questions by me, as reported in *Hansard* of February 10, 1982, at page 14855, that there was going to be more funds. He said there was going to be an increase of 12 per cent in each year for the next three years. His parliamentary secretary, speaking in the late show debate, at page 15090 on February 16, 1982, had this to say:

The Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) offered to continue the present EPF program and give it a 12 per cent increase per year until March 1984. The hon. member may want to call an increase of 12 per cent a cut. I cannot rewrite the dictionary.

I do not know what he was talking about. Where is the 12 per cent increase per year, for three years, that the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) was talking about, according to the Secretary of State and the parliamentary secretary? We cannot find that increase. We find a reduction in the cash by 8 per cent this year. We find that the amount goes up by the moving average of the GNE but there is no arrangement in this bill for an extension for post-secondary education, any monitoring of the activities of councils of ministers of education. So we have a Secretary of State who comes to us and he huffs and he puffs and he says that the transfers for education are going to go up by 12 per cent, but they are going down by 8 per cent. He proudly tells a meeting of the Canadian Association of University Teachers that they are going to have no cuts, that they are going to be better off and are going to get more money. He even tells his own university in the city of Halifax that they are going to get more money. He has to look at the blue book where the transfers of post-secondary education are reduced from \$1.65 billion last year to \$1.5 billion this year. That is his record. On that basis, having made those representations, he has no alternative but to give up his ministry.

Mr. Speaker, the task force committee was made up of four Liberal members, two members from this party, myself and the member from Lethbridge-Foothills (Mr. Thacker), and one from the New Democratic Party, the hon. member from Winnipeg-Birds Hill. The hon. member for Gloucester (Mr. Breau) was chairman. The hon. members from Vaudeuil (Mr. Herbert) and Verchères (Mr. Loiselle), both from the province of Quebec, were there. The hon. member for Scarborough