

The fact is that while the government has put in more money in terms of dollars, it has not put more purchasing power. It has nicked away at the purchasing power. Therefore the ability of Newfoundland and Labrador and other provinces affected has been nicked away at, their ability to provide health care, post-secondary education, to look after those on the welfare rolls who through no fault of their own cannot look after themselves has not increased.

That is the tragedy. Under the guise of increases this government is making it increasingly miserable for those people to make ends meet and get their youngsters into university.

Education will be for the privileged and the elite if this crowd keeps going. It is absolutely miserable what this government is doing to the people of Canada.

While it is doing that, how is it treating the people making \$100,000 a year? Since 1984, if you in this country earn \$100,000 or more, under the tax changes brought in by this administration, you are paying \$1,600 less in federal taxes than you were eight years ago. Your purchasing power has increased.

I cannot say the same thing for the people out there who want to put their youngsters through university, but this government keeps kicking them in the guts.

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, I am going to step through some of what the member discussed in relation to his home province and the Atlantic provinces in general. Maybe he can reflect on my comments.

There is some commonality in our approaches to this, much to our amazement. When we are talking about payments to the provinces it is very important that we clarify. Basically, we are talking about three packages that we deal with in regard transfers to the provinces. We are talking about equalization, Established Programs Financing and the Canada Assistance Plan.

I just want to remind the House that in his province those three payments account for something in the area of 40 per cent or more of the province's revenues. In my home province of New Brunswick they account for 39 per cent.

What I want to stress in relation to the member's statement in this debate today is that equalization

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itself—this becomes very confusing back home—that one payment to my home province accounts for about 23 per cent of its revenues. Equalization alone to Newfoundland, considered in isolation, accounts for about 30 per cent of its revenue.

I want to emphasize that we have had some delay in the passage of this bill because of the NDP. I want to stress that, because it is so important to Newfoundland and New Brunswick especially. There is a payment on April 16 and on April 22.

A cheque on April 16 worth \$40 million could be delayed because of the delay in the passage of this bill. Another cheque for \$40 million, which is real money going to the province of Newfoundland, could be delayed on April 22.

As for my home province of New Brunswick, a cheque on April 16 for \$39 million that we would like to send out to New Brunswick and a cheque that should be going out on April 22 for \$38 million, a total of \$77 million is in jeopardy because of delays caused by the NDP. Would the member please comment on that?

Mr. Simmons: Mr. Speaker, this debate is not exactly about some emergency situation.

I could have told the Prime Minister the day that he took office in September 1984 that one of the regular matters that his administration would have to deal with is seeing that the money went out to the provinces and ensuring that the government had the legislative authorization to do so.

This is not exactly something that arose overnight. One of the onuses on the government House leader is to ensure that the legislation is brought in to allow for adequate debate. The Tories cannot presume that they are going to get it rubber stamped.

• (1550)

I say to him, and to the member for Carleton—Charlotte who raised the question, that this whole issue, the whole reason we are here, the whole reason there are 295 benches here and the Speaker is up there and there are staff at the table and pages and so on and so forth, is because this government, like it or not, is accountable to the Canadian people. That is why we have television, so that the people of Canada can hold this government accountable, particularly in the area of how it raises and spends money. The government House leader must