

*Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act*

When we pass Bill C-96, we had better realize that we are going to deliver to the health care system of Canada a severe body blow. When the Minister of Health spoke out in Vancouver, he knew full well what the effects of Bill C-96 would be. If he knew that he was undermining the health care system by refusing to transfer significant sums of money to be used in that system, what then did he say when he spoke to a group of people who are concerned about health care?

After Bill C-96 becomes law, we are going to have a poorer system of health care but the Minister of Health said that his number one goal is to strengthen self-care practices among Canadians. He said that the first and most frequent form of health care is the care that people provide for themselves. I suggest that that is the kind of health care we will have in a post-Bill C-96 world. Canadians had better learn self-care practices and had better learn how to become their own physicians. The Minister said in Vancouver that his policy is to strengthen the motivation, the skill and the confidence of people to care for themselves. That is the brave new world of health care after Bill C-96. Canadians have to look after themselves because there will be fewer people in the health care field, facilities will be poorer and technology will be out of date.

The Minister said that Canadians have to take care of themselves but he has another goal. The other goal is self-help or mutual support. That is the answer to the problems which will be created by Bill C-96. He is telling Canadians to get active in the self-help movement. I do not know exactly what this means. I suppose it means that if a Canadian is facing one of life's crises, if he is sick, dying or incapacitated in one way or another, he cannot look to the health care system for help so he will look around to see if there is someone who will hold his hand for a while. If he cannot find anyone like that, I suppose the only other choice is to hold his own hand.

No, Mr. Speaker, I am distressed that Parliament, in the name of fighting the deficit, would attack one of the best health care systems in the world. We can afford to have the best health care system in the world. Any measures taken by Parliament to undermine that health care system must, I think, be vigorously opposed.

For my second point, I would like to say that I am not for a moment suggesting that the Established Programs Financing agreement that now exists is perfect in every respect. When it opens up for renegotiation, I think there are some changes that could be introduced. However, we should not break into the program in the middle of it and unilaterally change it. We should wait until the agreement comes to an end and then make some changes at that time.

There is one area, for example, which I would like to re-examine at the time the agreement comes open. We know that the poorest quality of health care in Canada is delivered to the Indian people of Canada. Every time this is pointed out, the federal Government indicates that there is truth in that but it does not have enough money available to provide quality

health care to Indian people who live in remote communities in the far-flung regions of Canada.

One of the problems with EPF is that the provinces receive money through that transfer program on behalf of native people. In other words, native people are included in the demographic calculations. The provinces receive money based on the number of Indian or native people who reside within those provinces and yet they deliver few if any at all health care services to native people.

If the Government were saying to me that since Bill C-96 provides for less money to flow to the provinces, those withheld funds would be used to build a first-class health care system for Indian people, that would mute much of my opposition. That would certainly pull the rug out from under me to a certain extent, would it not, Mr. Speaker? However, I have not heard a single Minister or Member of Parliament from the other side tell me that with the withheld EPF funds, the Government will build a better health care system for native people. That argument has never been used to justify Bill C-96.

For my third point, I would like to say a word about how the legislation that is now at third reading stage with the guillotine on and closure imposed will affect education. Hon. Members will note I did not say post-secondary education, I said education. I said that because we heard testimony with respect to Bill C-96, particularly from the Canadian Teachers' Federation, showing that by increasing the competition for resources at the provincial level, the proposed cut-backs will inevitably have adverse spill-over or domino effects on the funding of elementary and secondary education. While some of us may have thought that Bill C-96 would adversely affect our post-secondary institutions, we now know that it will go beyond that.

It is serious enough that the Bill affects post-secondary education. Our post-secondary educational system is beginning to crumble. Did you know, Mr. Speaker, that there is no longer a world-class university in Canada?

**Mr. Oberle:** When did we ever have one?

**Mr. Penner:** My hon. friend asked when we ever had one. Does he not believe that the University of Toronto or McGill were at one time world-class universities? Now they are not. Bill C-96 will add to that crumbling effect. Not only will Bill C-96 affect our universities and colleges, it will affect the entire educational system everywhere.

• (2100)

I should like to quote from the brief of the Canadian Teachers' Federation in respect of the direct effects on post-secondary education. They indicated the following to Parliament:

The universities and other post-secondary institutions of this country are an important part of the educational pyramid of which elementary and secondary education forms the base. Adequately funded post-secondary institutions are absolutely vital to Canada's social, economic and cultural development.