

*Supply*

A provincial New Democratic convention will be taking place in my riding at the University of British Columbia on Friday. Canadian Press has said the following about that convention:

This year's provincial New Democratic party convention may lack the excitement of last year's leadership race—

That is for sure. It is going to be a big yawn. It is going to be so dull that the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis) wanted to hype it up a bit this afternoon.

I believe we should primarily be concerned with our own jurisdiction and I will deal with that in a moment. However, I might suggest to the Hon. Member who introduced the motion, and to his colleagues, that the New Democratic Party happens to be part of the problem in British Columbia. The polarization between the Social Credit on the right and the NDP on the left has paralysed that province for several years. There is no feeling of compromise, there is no attitude of consensus and there is no civility in discussion. There is a crying need, I believe, for a moderate voice in that province.

*[Translation]*

It cannot be said too often that the situation in British Columbia is extremely polarized. Instead of having a consensus, instead of having a civilized debate, there is perpetual confrontation, which makes for an extremely unhappy political environment.

*[English]*

That is why I believe that moderate voices will prevail. Hon. Members opposite may not agree, but I believe that there is an opportunity for Liberalism and for moderate voices to gain a threshold in the legislature of the Province and in the Parliament of Canada.

I believe that if one has suggestions to make to the Government of another jurisdiction, one should go to that jurisdiction and tell the Government about them in person. I did that in Kamloops last Friday when I was in the riding of the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap, and I did the same earlier in the day in Kelowna, the provincial riding of the Premier of the Province, the Hon. William Bennett. I talked about issues in which the federal Government had a joint role to play.

The most pressing issue facing the province in terms of investment for the future is education. It is the key to our future right across the country and is or should be the number one priority. Education in British Columbia is now in a shambles. There has been no commitment from either the provincial or the federal Government to rescue that situation. New technology is upon us and, unless the Province of British Columbia educates its young people to respond to that technology in terms of training, we will not be able to compete with the Pacific Rim, our natural market.

Retraining of members of our older workforce who are being replaced by machines and robots and affected by economic cycles over which they have no control is absolutely crucial. Technical education is fundamental to the future of British Columbia. If we are going to allow the young people of the province to reach their potential, to contribute to the

country and to retain hope in the country, then education must be given more attention than it has been given in British Columbia.

● (1620)

Yes, it is primarily a provincial jurisdiction. But, there is a federal role. When I was Minister of Finance I can recall negotiating post-secondary education agreements with the provinces. The idea was that 50 per cent of every dollar came from the taxpayers of Canada, as was authorized by Parliament, and 50 per cent came from the legislature of each province. The people of British Columbia, through their Government, have seen those federal funds, contributed to by the taxpayers of the country, diverted to the extent that next year, instead of the fifty-fifty relationship between the taxpayer and the country and the taxpayer and the province, the people of Canada will pay over 100 per cent for post-secondary education operating costs in British Columbia because the funds have been diverted from education for other purposes.

As a result, the universities in British Columbia are in trouble. The universities are losing their best researchers and professors. Student aid is also under attack, rendering less accessible university education to the broad population, regardless of family income or background. That investment is being neglected, primarily in British Columbia.

We want to reach out to the Pacific Rim and the markets of the Far East. We should be concentrating on educating our young people in British Columbia in the Chinese, Japanese, Korean, Russian and Far East languages. We should be learning their cultures and business practices in order to allow British Columbia to compete on a world scale. The Government of British Columbia is not meeting that challenge, nor is it responding to federal initiatives.

George Pedersen, formerly the President of the University of British Columbia, which is in my riding, resigned. He said:

What I find completely impossible to accept is the uncertainty and complete lack of planning that is going on in this province as it relates to our university system.

At the primary and secondary level the Minister of Education for British Columbia is now firing school boards. Well, I may disagree with the political opinions of some of the trustees in the Vancouver School Board, and other school boards, but those trustees were democratically elected. We have local school boards to better co-ordinate the priorities of the parents and the priorities of the teachers in the operation of the schools in individual communities. The schools are better run from the communities. The schools are not better run from Victoria, and they are certainly not better run from Ottawa. Those trustees were fired. I find that heavy-handed. I find the action Draconian. As I said in Kelowna, which is the constituency of the Premier, I find that action to be a rape of the democratic process.

I would like to speak about the medicare situation. The Supreme Court of British Columbia judgment said that the Government of British Columbia was violating the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and the Canada Health Act in restrict-