

Federal Transfers to Provinces

know many doctors who earn less than members of the House. Out of that lesser income, they must provide their office, staff and their own pension. That is what I am saying. Why not be honest with the doctors? If Canadians want doctors to be civil servants, why do we not enter into that negotiation? Here is what we would have to do.

We would have to say to the doctor that he will have this type of salary. Let us assume it is the same as we receive. Members of the NDP are often critical of doctors, but they sure take their \$65,000, some \$16,300 of which is tax free. We could turn to the doctors and say that we will give them \$75,000, which will put them on a par with Members of Parliament. They could have access to the same type of pension, 5 per cent a year. After six years, each member of the NDP will either resign from the House or be thrown out and collect a pension of a minimum of 30 per cent.

An hon. Member: Don't you get that?

Mr. Thacker: Sure I do, but at least I am honest. I do not stand up and hypocritically condemn someone else. That is exactly what members of the NDP do.

An hon. Member: What are you doing?

Mr. Thacker: I am condemning the hypocrisy of the NDP. I have a feeling that if we went to the doctors and offered them \$75,000 a year with the same pension plan as that of Members of Parliament, deputy ministers and senior management, and provided them with office space and staff that Members of Parliament and others receive, and required them to work 37.5 hours a week as do civil servants, every doctor in the land would accept that. If they could get in the trough with that kind of money, they would be in it. Why do we not do that? The cost to the Canadian people would be billions of dollars.

I want to deal with the incomes of doctors. The NDP talk about \$100,000. That is not correct. It is true that some specialists make a lot of money, but the average GP works 60 to 70 hours a week. That is why his income is as high as it is. He puts in super-long hours. If a doctor worked 37.5 hours a week, he would earn only half as much as a Member of Parliament. If the Canadian people had to choose between their doctor or their Member of Parliament, they would choose their doctor. When I travelled across the country, including my travels with the task force, I gained a very strong feeling that people favour their doctors. They appreciate the hard work their doctors do. For the NDP to challenge that is just incredible.

The hon. member for Winnipeg-Birds Hill went after the doctors today. He challenged them. If he is going to criticize them and then portray doctors to us as being good people, why does he not say one good word about them? I have never heard that hon. member say anything good about doctors.

Post-secondary education is another critical issue in our society. The cutbacks here are going to hurt more than anywhere else. By making these cutbacks in the Atlantic provinces, the Liberals are attacking the future of the nation. Just

as the deficit places a burden on future generations, cutting back support for post-secondary education will also affect the future. There will be fewer people coming out of our universities and colleges who are adequately trained to take on the challenges of the future. That is bad.

Today the Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) made a funny statement about EPF. He said the universities were not meeting the national goals, not responding to the imperatives of the federal government. When I asked him to clarify that, he did not do very well. The Minister of Justice (Mr. Chrétien) made an interesting comment with regard to the reason for the cutbacks. He said the federal government is going to determine where the money goes because his own province of Quebec uses the money for ulterior purposes.

That may well be, because that province has an elected separatist government that is doing some mighty funny things. However, let us not make cutbacks in all the other provinces, because of a separatist government in Quebec. For years and years people have had to move out of the Atlantic provinces in order to find jobs. The taxpayers in the Atlantic provinces have been keeping the institutions going, providing some of the top graduates in every discipline, but these graduates have had to go to other parts of Canada to find work. So it is quite appropriate that the federal government should transfer enormous amounts of money for education. Maybe it should be 100 per cent.

Mr. LeBlanc: It is. In my province it is 98 per cent.

Mr. Thacker: Why then was there a cutback of \$181.2 million in the transfer payments by the Secretary of State (Mr. Regan)? Check page 132 of the estimates. It is in the Blue Book.

The real issue in post-secondary education is fiscal capacity. How can those seven provinces east of Saskatchewan cope with the deficit? The federal government can because it has access to taxation across the whole country. That is not something that the people in P.E.I. can bear. There is clearly a cutback. The revenue guarantee is a fraudulent excuse. I will be glad to oppose this bill tonight because the government has been dishonest with the Canadian people.

Mr. Maurice A. Dionne (Northumberland-Miramichi): Mr. Speaker, it was not my intention to participate in this debate. However, after listening to the last two speeches, there are a few comments that should be put on the record. We just heard an attempt by a couple of hon. members to drive wedges between the people of this country. I take extreme exception to that kind of political rhetoric and dishonesty.

I was astounded and astonished to hear the hon. member for Hillsborough (Mr. McMillan) talk about the shameful way in which the federal government is treating his province. Let me put a few facts on the record. Let us examine the federal contribution to provinces for post-secondary operating expenses for the years 1974-75 and 1981-82. I can give the