

The federal government tosses around the figure of \$640 million for the thrust fund. Spread over six years, that is \$106 million roughly per year and less than \$5 per capita. That will be only a small contribution which the provincial governments will have to more than match in order to provide nursing facilities, community health clinics, home nursing and medical care. What the provinces require and what the federal government has consistently refused, is continued federal involvement in the guarantee that 50 per cent of the cost of present health insurance programs and additional health insurance services that inevitably must be added to the present programs will be shared by the federal government.

The attempts by the federal government to pass this responsibility on to the provinces can mean only one thing. The additional sources of revenue that the federal government is offering to the provinces will enable some of the wealthier provinces to continue to maintain a fairly high level of health services. It will mean for the other provinces lower health services. It will mean that they will have to apply deterrent charges and residence qualifications, and all the talk about uniform standards and portability will inevitably go out the window. You cannot develop national unity by fragmenting Canada's health policies so they vary from province to province, depending upon the financial condition of the particular province.

I notice that according to the communiqué the conference agreed that at one of its next meetings it will discuss industrial policy and foreign investment. Before that conference is held I hope the Prime Minister and his colleagues will present to this parliament what their industrial policy is and what their policy is on foreign investment, because you cannot have an industrial policy unless they also have a national energy policy, and we have been waiting for years for such a policy.

Finally, I notice that in the communiqué there are these words concerning inflation:

... there was general but not unanimous support among first ministers for the view of the federal government that it was not of a character which could be dealt with effectively in present circumstances by controls over prices and incomes.

Mr. Speaker, the communiqué tells us what the first ministers, or at least some of the first ministers, agreed should not be done. We have had no statement from the government nor from the conference concerning what should be done to meet the problem of rising prices in this country. We have had no statement from the government, and I doubt whether the government even raised the matter, concerning whether or not the provinces would be prepared to pass enabling legislation giving the proposed Food Prices Review Board concurrent powers to deal with unjustified price increases across the country. Did the federal government ask the provinces if they were prepared to pass such enabling legislation? We were not told. As a matter of fact, the federal government has no policy and is now seeking to pass the buck to the provinces by saying that the provinces agree with it that price controls are not necessary. This conference, apparently achieved very little in the way of concrete attainments, largely as the result of the failure of leadership on the part of the federal government to set forth concrete proposals and give the necessary leadership to the provinces and to the nation in these critical times.

Federal-Provincial Affairs

[Translation]

Mr. Réal Caouette (Témiscamingue): Mr. Speaker, with respect to statements that are empty, devoid of any sense, let us speak of a statement like the one the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) has just made. There is no doubt that, when he read the document he was given by one of his writers, he must have laughed up his sleeve because, in fact, he brings us the results of a conference where people agreed, while the provincial premiers in fact were not in agreement at this conference and went back home, without any exception, disappointed with the way the federal authorities had welcomed them in Ottawa.

Mr. Speaker, in the case of the Quebec premier, he admitted that fact to newsmen, saying: I did not get anything tangible; I came back with principles. He went back to Quebec with principles, but without any money! The same goes for the Ontario premier. The other premiers also complained of the way the Prime Minister snubbed them when they came to discuss their fiscal problems with the federal authorities. The premiers did not come here to ask what they should do, but to get federal assistance in the fields of social security and post-secondary education.

Mr. Speaker, each and every premier went back to his province empty-handed. Three days were spent discussing the redistribution of that rarity: money. The provinces said to the right hon. Prime Minister of Canada: We do not have enough money. The right hon. Prime Minister of Canada replied: Be content with what you have. We can do no more now, but the situation may improve after 1974.

Mr. Speaker, to my mind the conference was the right opportunity to discuss the use of the Bank of Canada in the service of the provinces. Instead of allowing the Bank of Canada to lend to the provinces for periods of six months, the government should order it to make loans for periods of 60 years. The provinces would thus be allowed to settle themselves their very urgent and important problems. But no, they preferred to discuss the short supply instead of abundance.

And the right hon. Prime Minister continues on page 3 of his statement as follows:

● (1430)

[English]

After discussion of the new federal formula for continued financial support for post-secondary education, it was agreed that the existing plan would remain in force for a three-year period commencing April 1, 1974.

"It was agreed".

[Translation]

Mr. Speaker, that was not accepted. The provinces were asking for something better because they are all facing problems in the field of education, in order to help young Canadians carry on with their studies.

Mr. Speaker, this conference is no exception to what we have experienced during the last 20 years or so. First there is some bright project and then it goes flop. The one that has just ended was like the others that we have known, and so long as we do not come to grips with the heart of the problem, that is finance, so long as we keep beating about the bush, arguing about who must and who must not tax, this Prime Minister like the ones who will