

Government Orders

I hope that I will not live to see that day return to this country. We have a great young population out there. As I told them that day, they are the people who will be running this country in the future. I am sure and I hope that they do a much better job of it than is being done at the present time.

There are a couple of more specific issues here that I would like to speak on.

The plan of the government is to extend these equalization and transfer payments systems for another two years rather than concluding with another five year agreement.

We all know that this government will be forced by law within the next 18 months to go to the electorate. I have a fear that by simply extending the current agreements it is only buying time, trying to get by the next election before some more Draconian measures will be brought in to deal with the provinces.

I hate to see this idea of letting us wait until after the election. When I hear governments saying, "Have we got a deal for you" I begin to get suspicious. If after the election, if by some quirk of fate, that this government happens to be successful, I fear that it will continue the program of dismantling the structures which have made Canada what it is today.

There is a change also proposed in the base year of the payments. This could be another way to allow the government more manoeuvrability in an election year.

Another issue in the proposed legislation is that the government is still trying to coerce the provinces into harmonizing the goods and services tax with the provincial sales tax thereby broadening the tax base for Canadians.

• (1740)

With the generous return of \$2 to taxpayers in the recent federal budget, I do not feel that many taxpayers across the country would be enthused by the prospect of harmonization of the provincial tax with the favourite tax of this government, the GST.

All in all I fear that this legislation signals yet another step in the move to change Canada away from a caring, concerned country where the strong look after and assist the weak to one where the government moves its responsibilities to another jurisdiction.

I fear this because we get into the other area of funding for medical services. This is one that has been talked about much in the last number of months. Many speakers have spoken on it.

Many people in the smaller provinces are scared of what is going to happen if the transfers going to the provinces continue to drop. Certainly, we are then going to be into a situation of different levels of medical services across the country.

When the constitutional committee was in Charlottetown during the first meeting it had as it started its journey across the country the premier of my province said that he would not want to see a checker-board type of medical services in this country. I am certain that nobody else wants to see that happen in this great country of ours.

I plead with the government that it not try to move this down the road for its own means, that it will be serious and that it will make sure that the transfers and the equalization payments are maintained and increased in this country. There are still many jurisdictions out there that are going to need the help of the central government and the other more affluent provinces for a long time to come.

I urge this government to be prepared to continue this, to improve it, not to stop it in the two years down the road and not to dismantle it.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment my colleague from Hillsborough. I share his view when he stated that this bill really deals with the very heart of what being a Canadian is.

He talked about the fact that his province, Prince Edward Island, is a province that is a recipient of funding from the national government. There are times when obviously the province of P.E.I. does not generate the wealth that some of the other provinces have.

I would like to say to my colleague that coming from Ontario, most of the people in Ontario, in fact a large majority of them have absolutely no difficulty in sharing the resources and the wealth creation mechanisms that are in the province of Ontario with all regions of the country.

What I am hearing time and time again is that the people of Ontario want a strong national government. They want the standards in medical care and in education in Prince Edward Island to be the same standards