

Government Orders

that what the public said to the Prime Minister on referendum day had very little to do with the Constitution.

None is so blind as he who will not see. If the Prime Minister does not see clearly or graphically and does not hear what the message was—

• (1350)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I think it may be useful to remind the hon. member that the debate is on Bill C-76, an act to amend certain statutes to implement certain fiscal provisions of the budget tabled in Parliament on February 25, 1992.

Mr. Simmons: I wondered what we were debating here.

I realize full well, but I ask this House, before it rushes to a judgment on this one, to keep in mind very clearly who are making the commitments here. All the talk from the Minister of Small Businesses and Tourism about how there will be a new millennium beginning tomorrow morning and that things will be all different if we up it from \$100,000 to \$200,000. We have no difficulty with that particular detail, none whatsoever. But this is the crowd that told us before how they were going to double research and development and how we ought to believe them on their measures with respect to the recession.

Admittedly I was taking a little licence to make an important point that if we are going to judge this piece of legislation we ought to keep in mind who leads the gang that brings this legislation before us. It is the same gang that has botched every measure they have tried with respect to getting us out of this recession. It is the same gang that has made life miserable for university students. It is the same gang that is driving some of our best minds out of this country. They want to be here doing research we can benefit from but instead, they are being driven across the border by the policies and negativeness of this particular government. Mr. Speaker, if you find that not to be relevant I will get even more relevant.

Let us look at the question of post-secondary education addressed in the bill. One will realize that the government wants to eliminate the six-month interest-free period for student loans for example. It wants to put a 3 per cent administrative fee on student loans. In short, the government wants to make it even more costly and difficult for people to go to university. Who wants to do

that? The same crowd that since 1986 has introduced a number of measures that together represent a cut in federal support of \$1.6 billion in the last six years. All together it was a cut of \$4.9 million in revenues flowing to the provinces for post-secondary education and health care.

Let us look at those Canada student loans for a moment. I heard in the last little while a couple of absolutely mind-boggling examples. Do you know, Mr. Speaker, that not only is the government going to remove the six-month interest holiday, not only does it want to put on a 3 per cent administration fee, but it has also set loose some of the most unprincipled collection agencies. I say to my friend from St. John's East, that we missed him yesterday at the forum in Gander. They were asking about him.

Mr. Reid: I was at Bonavista last time.

Mr. Simmons: I hope my colleague was in Bonavista. It is his riding the member will realize, not mine. I was charitable. We missed the member yesterday.

I wanted to say to him that the crowd he supports over there have unleashed some of the most unprincipled collection agencies on little old ladies. I will give him a specific example that has come to my attention in the last hour or so. Does he realize there is a fellow who has a student loan of \$3,000 or \$4,000 and has been out of university for two or three years? The loan is due, no question about that. He is 26 years of age. The loan is in his name and in the last few days a collection agency at the behest of the government the hon. member supports was not calling that 26-year old man but the mother of that 26-year old man. The mother is of very limited means.

An hon. member: Bravo.

Mr. Simmons: There is a stranger in the House.

An hon. member: *Parce que je parle français?*

Mr. Simmons: In any language, there is a stranger in the House.

The collection agent made a suggestion to this mother who, by the way, has no responsibility for the loan. She signed no piece of paper. She happens to be the biological mother of this individual but he is a person quite well of age. One of the suggestions the collection agent made to this mother was: "Sell your house if you have to", when she asked where she would get the