

Government Orders

That is partly because it was not harmonized to begin with, but mostly because it was there and it has done so much to discourage economic activity in Canada to force it south of the border. It has been partly responsible for the severe recession which Canadians are now facing.

In conclusion, I would hope that in the course of the debate on this bill in committee, we will have a chance as parliamentarians to look carefully at the fine print of this legislation, what has been negotiated with the provincial governments, what it means for the future of equalization payments and transfers, the very important responsibility which this government has to have to manage and to promote the interests of all Canadians regardless of where they live.

I hope and expect that that will occur in the next three weeks. I lament that we will not have had more time in which to do so, in which to really take seriously what is really a very fundamental piece of legislation.

Mr. Dennis Mills (Broadview—Greenwood): Mr. Speaker, I want to compliment my colleague from Cape Breton Highlands—Canso and I want to ask him a question about federal presence.

The Prime Minister of Canada a few months ago came out with this speech—I do not know if he was on one of his talk shows—and he was saying that Canadians have to be more patriotic. This was on the front page of all the Toronto papers and I am sure it made the front pages of most papers right across the country. Quite frankly, I agreed with the Prime Minister. I think Canadians should be more patriotic.

However, I think that with the way the way the Prime Minister is dismantling programs and handing over added responsibilities to the provinces we are working against the federal presence in our country which ultimately leads to a feeling of patriotism.

When the member talked about the fact that there is close to \$30 billion in fiscal transfers equalization payments, I wondered what the member's views would be that somehow tied to those transfers, to those equalization payments, there would be some kind of a federal presence formula so that in the universities and the hospitals and wherever else funding is from the national government through those arrangements, it would somehow be reflected in some kind of a federal presence which would ultimately lead to a feeling of patriotism,

the very thing that the Prime Minister says we need so badly.

Mr. LeBlanc (Cape Breton Highlands—Canso): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank my colleague from Broadview—Greenwood who has demonstrated in so many creative interventions in this House and elsewhere ideas that can lead to that renewed sense of patriotism and spirit of national pride that we as Canadians can justifiably have and need to express more openly.

I think one of the problems with this government and with this Prime Minister is that they have been unwilling and timid in their expression of leadership in the face of perhaps opposition in certain parts of the country when it comes to asserting the pride of Canadians and the pride of being a Canadian and reflecting that pride in our national institutions.

There are all kinds of examples in which the government has done that. For example, as my colleague from Glengarry—Prescott—Russell mentions, the removal of Canada Post from the logo of the Canada Post Corporation is a small example. There is another example: it is Radio Canada International. Another example which has caused constituents of mine to be outraged is the fact that the National Arts Centre in its travelling tour is not going to be singing the national anthem in the province of Quebec, and the failure of the Prime Minister of Canada to take it to task for that.

Those are just small examples in which we as Canadians who want to affirm our Canadian identity and want to have that transcend our local identity need to see the leadership from our government in order to do that. The member is quite right. I believe it would be an excellent idea to put the Canadian flag up front, to put some symbol of the Canadian government's participation in programs that the Canadian government is participating in.

That was done when the Liberal government was in power. You would see signs that indicated the federal presence very clearly. It was a source of pride and it showed Canadians that their tax dollars have gone into that project.

Those gestures and those symbols are important, particularly at this crucial time.

Mr. Jesse Flis (Parkdale—High Park): Mr. Speaker, I just wish to draw to the attention of Canadians that the