

Health Resources Fund Act

The minister also stated that Prince Edward Island had received all its funds. This is at variance with what I have been told. They indicate they have not received much of their funds as yet. That may be why the minister is introducing an amendment to this bill. Perhaps it would put them in a better position, but when the bill was introduced there was no evidence that Prince Edward Island had been consulted or had received a significant portion of its share of the funds.

There is no doubt in my mind that the provinces are objecting strenuously to the amendment. They find themselves in the middle of construction projects, training programs for which they—

Miss Bégin: They are opposing the amendment? They are begging for the amendment.

Mr. Yewchuk: The minister is interjecting again. She has just finished her remarks but she seems to have a lot more to say. If she likes, Mr. Speaker, I will sit down and let her finish her speech.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Miss Bégin: Mr. Speaker, would the hon. member permit a question to clarify his speech, please?

Mr. Yewchuk: Mr. Speaker, I will reserve five minutes at the end of my remarks for the minister to make clarifications. She can ask any questions she wants then, and perhaps also in the standing committee.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): You have unlimited time. Five minutes at the end of unlimited time?

● (1622)

Mr. Yewchuk: We do have unlimited time. At the rate of interference from the other side we will need unlimited time to get through my notes before the day is over.

As I said, the provinces are indeed objecting to this unilateral welching out of a commitment. In my view that is not the way to run a country. Some provinces were advised at the outset that their projects would qualify. However, at the time of the announcement of this bill there are some projects which have not yet been approved with the result that the provinces are now left dangling. I am sorry the minister was not more specific in terms of her proposed amendment to this bill respecting an additional \$15 million. We are not in a position to know what projects she had approved to cover that extra \$15 million. I know it has been tabled—

Miss Bégin: I said it.

Mr. Yewchuk: I have not had a chance to see the materials to which she has referred. For example, the government of Alberta was left up in the air concerning a children's hospital in Calgary. This results in a \$3.5 million shortfall for this project—

Miss Bégin: I signed it. I said it.

[Mr. Yewchuk.]

Mr. Yewchuk: The minister now states she signed it.

Miss Bégin: You did not listen.

Mr. Yewchuk: I am glad to hear that.

Respecting the province of Manitoba, which I said was notified but not consulted in advance, it has committed capital projects based on the premise that at least for capital projects federal funds would be available to the extent set out in the Health Resources Fund Act. If that support is withdrawn, Manitoba will be required to fund an additional \$7.2 million from provincial sources. Projects submitted for consideration by the federal health and welfare department to which no federal commitment has been made include the Seven Oaks project for \$4.7 million. Planning and preparation are under way but projects which have not been submitted yet include the Cancer Treatment and Research Foundation for an amount of \$1.4 million, and the energy system for the Health Sciences Centre for the amount of \$1.1 million. A telex was received by Manitoba from the minister five days after this bill was made public to the press.

The province of Newfoundland was also informed but not consulted. However, Newfoundland announced it had received its allocated funds and was not too concerned. But it found that it was not now in a position to help the other Atlantic provinces which had helped Newfoundland with projects in the past.

Nova Scotia had not been notified. That province will lose \$2.2 million for proposed projects planned but not yet approved as of September 9, 1978. These projects included renovation and equipment for nursing units, in the areas of physiotherapy and occupational therapy, as well as rehabilitation equipment and other non-specific projects.

In the case of British Columbia a large amount of money was required for its development program which, as the minister had indicated, had to fit into a five-year development plan for health resources. This has been severely curtailed.

I assure you, Mr. Speaker, that the on again off again policies of this particular administration are causing serious discontent among the provinces, and have done so for the past ten years. The general approach that this minister and the Prime Minister uses, and which the previous minister of national health and welfare used when he occupied that position, seems to be one of confrontation. I will not use the word deliberate, but one could easily conclude that deliberate confrontation with the provinces is going on, perhaps to create a hassle for reasons which could include some political expediency for this federal administration.

It is nothing short of criminal negligence when funds are cut for health research and facilities in this way. We know that, in the long run, every human being in this country will be affected during his or her lifetime. This government seems to be saying in this particular instance that the saving of dollars seems to be more important than good health. In my view, and I am sure hon. members will agree, this is certainly false economy.