

But how can they argue—and this is in a brochure the Department of Finance distributed to these Members and which many of them have used—how can they say that Bill C-96 will not affect the provinces' public finances, when the Budget indicates that the purpose of Bill C-96 is to save \$2 billion in the year 1990-91 alone! And if we look at what Bill C-96 represents in terms of financial resources foregone by the provinces and their post-secondary education and health programs, if we want to see what kind of impact it can have, all we have to do is look at the figures that were released, and we see a cumulative amount of nearly \$8 billion, if we go as far as 1991. This means that the provinces, as we were told in committee by those who appeared before the committee and those who sent in briefs, will have a difficult choice to make. They can cut health and post-secondary education programs. Or, they can set higher tuition fees for universities, CEGEPS or community colleges, and in the health care sector, increase hospital charges for private rooms. They will either transfer this Bill the federal Government no longer wants to pay to the users or the taxpayers, or they will have to increase own deficits.

● (1610)

If that happens, it would be the supreme irony, at a time when Government has constantly been haranguing us on the subject. Mr. Speaker, I wonder how many Members, on your righthand side have risen to defend the concept that the deficit has to be cut at any price? I call that deficit theology. And now, the same Government, those same Members are transferring the deficit to the provinces with the message: You do something about it.

I call this flagrant injustice. On the Government side they were talking about the 6-and 5-program which included reductions in transfer payments. I may remind the Hon. Member that first of all, this was done only for post-secondary education transfers—health programs were not affected—and that the 6-and 5-program had a time limit of not more than two years, and while Bill C-96 restricts or reduces the expenditure growth rate, it is for an unlimited period.

Mr. Speaker, that is why I had tried to introduce amendments to the Bill precisely to set a time limit on the duration of this legislation. I did my best. Indeed, the committee heard a suggestion made by a group speaking on behalf of Canadian workers, urging the committee and Parliament to set a time limit to see in a few years what would be the consequences of Bill C-96, and so as to be able to launch another public debate which would certainly have been beneficial with respect to the application of the basic principles of these health and post-secondary education programs.

For technical reasons, my Motion No. 5 aimed at setting a time limit on this legislation was rejected, as were propositions intended to put off enactment for a year just so there would be enough time to hold meaningful negotiations with the provinces.

#### *Federal-Provincial fiscal arrangements*

Worse still, Mr. Speaker, we are dealing with Bill C-96 at a time when the fiscal arrangements between Canada and the provinces have only one more year to run. We are in the fifth year, the last year of the agreements, and under normal circumstances that is the time used by the central Government and the provinces to hold serious consultations. On the contrary, once the Government had announced its decision to cut expenditures by \$2 billion in 1990-91, it had to begin slashing in transfer payments to the provinces, and there was a federal-provincial conference. Every single Minister who spoke publicly said that this legislation was unacceptable. There was no consultation to speak of, it was simply a Government fiat. The fact of the matter is that if my Motion No. 1 had been accepted the Government and Parliament would have been able to undertake more thorough negotiations to find possibly cheaper ways of delivering health care services. During consideration of this Bill in committee, we received submissions which recommended, for instance, that we establish first line care so that nurses may provide care at the time of a first consultation before the patient goes to a hospital, either at an outside patient clinic or at a doctor's office, or so that they may advise on care for minor injuries, and if the Government had taken the time, it would probably have been able to come to acceptable agreements with the provinces for such matters. Instead, the Government decided to use its majority and not to hear the suggestions made by various groups or to accept the proposals contained in my motions. Indeed, while these motions may not have been in order technically, the Government could have made them acceptable by proposing them in its own name as they deal with a financial matter. However, the Progressive Conservative Government has obviously decided to solve its problem by transferring it to others. In this regard, I could give numerous examples of things that happened during consideration of the Bill by the legislative committee.

Mr. Speaker, the committee received the visit of many groups. We heard nursing associations. We heard the association of colleges which provide post-secondary education. We heard groups representing the interests of foreign students in Canada. There is serious concern that Bill C-96 will force the universities to increase the registration fees for foreign students. Some might say that, as these are not Canadian citizens, it will not really affect the quality of education in Canada, but a very well-documented paper presented to us clearly shows that the participation of foreign students on our university campuses is a major asset in the field of research and development.

In other words, those foreign students often come here to work towards Ph. D. degrees, thereby providing many of our university departments with important human resources which strengthen their research communities, a positive result not only for our own universities in the short run, but also for the entire Canadian economy in the long run, since the links forged by foreign students last for very long periods of time. Those students who come here to work for Ph. D. degrees in economics, accounting, engineering, medical science, who