

billion through their legislatures. He also knows that the seven provincial governments east of Saskatchewan have substantial deficits. He also knows that it is Liberal policy to reduce its share for post-secondary education, and that that will immediately cause tuition increases, a cut in programs, or, indeed, increased provincial deficits. Why does the Secretary of State, as a former premier of a have-not province, agree with such a policy?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Secretary of State): Madam Speaker, I thank the hon. member for Lethbridge-Foothills for learning his lines so well. I only regret that the quality of the delivery was much better than the accuracy of the content, and that the hon. member—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Regan:—had so many errors that, if I were marking his paper, there would be no way I would be able to give him a pass at all.

First of all, in relation to the proportion of the cost of post-secondary education that is paid by the Government of Canada as compared to the provinces, the hon. member is totally inaccurate, as he is in a number of the other items he mentioned. I want to assure him, in case he was not here when I explained before, that the Government of Canada places a very high priority on the continued support of post-secondary education. I point out to him that in this regard the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and that for the past number of years the federal government has been increasing the proportion of the cost of post-secondary education that we pay; whereas the provinces, as a whole, and most of them individually, have been decreasing their share. I suggest to the hon. member that he go back home to Alberta and urge the province to use its great Heritage Fund to provide a better level of support to post-secondary education.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

REQUEST THAT MINISTER RESIGN IF FUNDING REDUCED

Mr. Blaine A. Thacker (Lethbridge-Foothills): Madam Speaker, every one of these statistics came from the Task Force on Fiscal Arrangements. The minister knows that the three-year delay in the GNP results in the federal government paying less. Concerning all of the figures, I challenge him to show me that they are in error. In a letter to students, dated October 29, 1981, the minister said:

Some may say that the federal Government plans to drastically reduce its support for post-secondary education. This is simply not true.

My supplementary question is this: Is the Secretary of State prepared to resign his seat if there is a cut in the federal share of post-secondary education?

Some hon. Members: Yes or no?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Secretary of State): I want to assure the hon. member through Your Honour that I have no intention of resigning my seat, because I think that by being here I

am able to express a view of the way Canada should operate which is useful in relation to providing assistance to our students in higher education and in relation to the development of a better, not worse, system of post-secondary education. I suggest to the hon. member that if he is going to be taken in by phony statistics, if he is going to listen to the Tory propaganda—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Regan:—that was spread across this country, he is not serving the interests of the students. He should recognize that, if he has some way of making criticism based on actions that government has not taken, then that is not serving a particularly good interest. He would be better off, when he has something to talk about when government has taken some action, to ask then for an explanation rather than question us on some mythical Conservative propaganda.

STATEMENT MADE BY GOVERNMENT LEADER IN SENATE

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, my supplementary question is directed to the Secretary of State, who tends to dismiss as totally inaccurate reports that the government intends to reduce its commitment to our community colleges and our universities. I would like to refer him to some accurate figures. At least I would think that they are accurate, because Senator Perrault, speaking on behalf of the government in the other place, stated on October 27 that the government remains committed to a continuous \$1.5 billion reduction—

Mr. Nielsen: Quote, unquote.

Miss MacDonald:—in post-secondary education and health care.

I would like to ask the Secretary of State whether he agrees with that statement made by the government leader in the Senate, or whether this is the case of the cabinet speaking out of one side of its mouth on one occasion and speaking out of the other side when it so suits it.

Hon. Gerald Regan (Secretary of State): Madam Speaker, if the hon. lady will—

Some hon. Members: "Member"!

Mr. Regan:—the hon. lady member will have a little patience—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Regan:—then she will have the opportunity, on the 12th, to see a budget presented. After that budget is presented by the Minister of Finance, then we will be able to deal in the situation of hard facts which are before the House, instead of speculation that may be made by various people in the Conservative ranks. I also want to take advantage of the opportunity to say to the hon. lady member that, since she is an Ontario member, she might well look at the decrease which