

*Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act*

are doing is moderating the growth of transfers to the provinces in a normal way, as good administrators. We are not just saying: We are cutting this and that, we are stopping everything. There has been a lot of careful planning.

Earlier, I heard the Opposition Member say there had been no consultation. There has been more consultation between the Prime Minister of Canada and the provincial Premiers, and between the Minister of Finance and the provincial Ministers of Finance on this subject, and on matters generally, in the last eighteen months than there was during the last five years.

Mr. Speaker, how can anyone say there was no consultation and there has been only confrontation during the last eighteen months? That is just not true!

My New Democratic Party colleague who spoke earlier quoted what was said by the Liberals and the Conservatives, and so forth. In 1980, if the NDP had supported the Conservative Party's policy instead of supporting the Liberals, maybe we would not be in the fix we are now. We would have had at least four years with less spending and the sound administration which was lacking. Mr. Speaker, I think we should refresh their memory a bit.

Now when we look at all this, and people start accusing us of cutting . . . Mr. Speaker, a cut-back means that of the so many billions of dollars which are given each year, there will be less money to go around next year. In the case under consideration there is no transfer payment cut-back in health and post-secondary education, but the rate of increase will decline.

So what did the provinces tell us? This was announced in November 1984. Since the provinces had planned ahead for 1985, they asked that it be deferred until 1986. Can you work it out so that we will not be affected by the November 1984 economic statement during our fiscal year 1984-85 and early 1986? We said yes, so this measure can be applied as of April 1, 1986.

Mr. Speaker, one has to know how the system works. The federal Government's projected expenditure increase was set at about 3 or 4 per cent. We do not intend to exceed 4 per cent. With respect to transfers payments to the provinces, our ceiling is 5 per cent, and that I would suggest attests to the effort we are making in that field to ensure a brighter future.

● (1220)

Post-secondary education is the current topic, Mr. Speaker, and that spells future. The Conservative Government, the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) and the Secretary of State (Mr. Bouchard) have all agreed that it is an important and necessary requirement, and that is what we are working on. But we must also administer the country in a businesslike manner because it was on the verge of bankruptcy when we took office.

We have now reached the point where 25 per cent of public revenues are earmarked for interest payments alone. In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, ours is a serious problem. We did not

have anything at all to do with it, it was created by Members opposite who are now urging us to spend, and spend yet more!

The minute we talk about amendments to slow the rate of increase, we are told: Don't do that. When we table a Budget, we are told: You are not cutting enough. I wish the Liberal Party or the New Democratic Party would tell us, for once in two years, and perhaps this morning: You should reduce such or such expenditures. We are waiting for constructive suggestions. All we got from them in two years was criticism, we never heard one single positive proposition.

In my opinion, Mr. Speaker, the role of the Opposition does not end with filibusters on any and all Government measures designed to improve the future, the kind of long-term Government policy for all Canadians in the health and educational fields. We know the health sector is experiencing hard times. Referring only to Quebec and my own riding of Trois-Rivières, problems we do have. True enough, the Government of Quebec may not be able to cope with the strong demand, but the funds are available, there has been no cut-back, and it will continue to receive ever higher payments over the coming years. Mr. Speaker, here are some figures which will give you a better picture. Quebec got \$3.5 billion in 1983-84, \$3.8 billion in 1984-85, and \$4 billion in 1985-86. This is certainly not a decrease, Mr. Speaker, and if someone claims that it is, we certainly did not go to the same accounting school.

As for our national expenditures, Mr. Speaker, we have said that they must be reduced. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson) has done a great job. We have had many Ministers of Finance in the last twenty years. Almost as many as twenty. In twenty years, not a single Liberal Minister of Finance said in a given year: We are going to spend so much and have a deficit of so much. This did not happen once. However, this year, the Minister of Finance has said: We are going to spend \$105 billion for the year 1985-86. Unfortunately, Mr. Speaker, he was wrong and we spent only \$104 billion. Mr. Speaker, I think that this shows that the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and the Minister of Finance know what is going on, where they are going and how to govern the country effectively and profitably in the interests of all Canadians.

This might not please the Opposition, but in addition to knowing how to govern, the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance are keeping their election promises as regards job creation and agreements with the provinces. Mr. Speaker, I have made a small list of the consultations between the Minister of Finance and his provincial counterparts. There was one in May 1985, another in late September 1985, one in November 1985, and another in December 1985. Let no one say that there were no consultations. Let no one say that we have resumed a confrontation policy. Mr. Speaker, within about eight months, the Minister of Finance of Canada sat down four times to discuss the problems of Canada with his provincial counterparts. The former federal Ministers of Finance would find it difficult to match this record.

Generally speaking, Mr. Speaker, the Federal Government is allocating more money to provincial health care and post-