

*Oral Questions*

After 18 months the gold plated MP pension is still in place. The bureaucracy is still spending wildly on new fax machines, office renovations and computer software. Over 100 loyal Liberals have sallied up to the trough to collect their government patronage positions. The government has the nerve to ask Canadians to pay more money into taxes.

Wait until the budget is one thing. What about these practical steps? When will this government start leading by example? When will the minister reform the MP pensions and put the brakes on out of control government spending?

[Translation]

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, one party accuses us of cutting too much, the other one wants us to cut deeper. I am confident that when the budget is tabled, the Liberal Party will, as always, find a middle ground and will not make indiscriminate cuts, nor go to the other extreme of refusing to control government spending.

We gave a clear idea of where we stand in the last budget and we will do it again in the upcoming one.

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## POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister.

Last Thursday, Quebec's National Assembly passed a resolution denouncing proposed federal cuts in post-secondary education and asking the federal government to withdraw from that sector and give Quebec the tax points equivalent to the level of Ottawa's current financial contribution to that sector.

Given the differences of opinion of the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Human Resources Development, can the Prime Minister tell us if his government will give a favourable reply to the National Assembly's request?

[English]

**Hon. Lloyd Axworthy (Minister of Human Resources Development and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, it would be very important for the hon. member to relay the message he has just delivered to colleagues in the Government of Quebec. Just before Christmas, as he will well know, it announced it will be cutting \$1.5 billion from health services, social services and education.

It would seem to me that if any government is going to take its responsibility, the question should be asked of the provincial Government of Quebec.

[Translation]

**Mr. Antoine Dubé (Lévis, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I remind the Minister of Human Resources Development that the motion was unanimously approved; in other words, it was also supported by the Quebec Liberal Party.

Are we to understand that, by refusing to provide a clear answer, the federal government persists in wanting to eliminate cash transfer payments and instead allocate part of these funds to the Canada Student Loans Program, without any regard for the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces over education?

• (1435)

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, again they should wait for the budget. To wonder whether the government will do this or that is to speculate. A budget will be tabled and the hon. member will have the opportunity to look at it. I find it unbelievable that, at a time when it is being rumoured that there will be more room to maneuver and more freedom of action for the provinces, the Bloc Québécois wants to maintain the status quo. That makes me very happy indeed.

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[English]

## TAXATION

**Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, this government has had 16 months to do nothing and it did. The Canadian Manufacturer's Association told the Minister of Finance that governments do not create jobs, customers do.

This government is talking about increasing taxes to the customers, taking money out of their pockets. Does the Minister of Finance not realize that increasing taxes will only kill jobs in this country?

**Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of Finance and Minister responsible for the Federal Office of Regional Development—Quebec, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, I appreciate very much the hon. member's question. I know that he is a very sincere member and he is very sincere in the questions he asks.

One likes to check what other governments have done. It was very interesting that the Government of Alberta, when the member asking the question was a member of that cabinet, had a series of budgets that substantially increased the tax burden on Albertans.

The question I would like the member to explain to me is what is the difference between the taxes that were introduced by that government and the taxes that he is attempting to forestall now?

**Mr. Ray Speaker (Lethbridge, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, the hon. Minister of Finance should also recognize that this minister at