

magnitude of the cuts. We are not here today talking about something small, we are not here discussing a trivial issue. We are discussing a very important issue for those people whom I represent in this House, and for the province that I represent here. Now these cuts—

[*Translation*]

Those cuts, Mr. Speaker, were referred to earlier by a Conservative Member, and I think it is the Hon. Member for Portneuf (Mr. Ferland)—when my hon. colleague for Westmorland—Kent (Mr. Robichaud) also stressed the importance of those cuts in his speech before the House—were referred to as management rationalization.

Mr. Speaker, how come that today Conservative members come and tell us that such cuts amount to management streamlining whereas when they were sitting in the Opposition benches they claimed that the 6 and 5 program—which was minimal in terms of cuts as compared with what we have today—was a series of major cuts? How did this turnabout happen, Mr. Speaker? Is it simply because Conservative Members are now sitting on the other side of the House—temporarily, of course—that they have changed their mind? Is that the reason? Or is it that Conservative Members refuse to defend the interests of their own province in this House and would rather blindly support the government?

Mr. Speaker, we do not know. We may never know. In view of the fact that many Conservative Members will soon be gone we may never have the opportunity to find out. This is why we have to know today, while they are still here.

[*English*]

The Government claims that it announced these measures in the 1985 Budget. We know that that is not entirely true. We know that the Budget Speech did refer to a reduction in EPF contributions, but it made no mention of a date. Therefore, only a general statement was made in the Budget, and it is now used as an excuse for zapping the provinces in this manner.

What did the provinces say about these cuts? You will recall that there was a conference in Halifax in November of 1985. I want to remind you that at that conference the Premiers were really upset with these cuts. Let me remind you, although I am sure you remember it vividly, what the Premier of the Province of Ontario said at that time, and I quote from *Le Devoir*. He said the following:

This reduction in the funds provided the provinces will translate into a reduction of services. There will be fewer hospital beds, warned the Ontario Premier, David Peterson, who believes as well that by 1990 the province will also lose some 75,000 places in its colleges and universities.

That is what one of the Premiers had to say, the Premier of the province that I have the honour to represent in this House. We have to take that very seriously. I am sure the Member for Ottawa West (Mr. Daubney), who is sitting across the floor and paying attention to this speech—I thank him for that—is taking note of this, and behind the curtain he will be raising this with the Minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson). Let me read

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further from the same interview. This one is with *The Gazette*, dated November 29, 1985. It states the following:

You don't call it a cut, you call it a breach of faith. You call it breaking a promise.

That is what the Premier of Ontario said to the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney). The Prime Minister shot back the following:

It is not a broken promise. It is a responsible attempt to deal with a major Canadian problem.

Is that not unusual that when you make promises it is perfectly reasonable to make them, but when you break them it is not unreasonable to break them, that then it is a responsible attempt to deal with a major Canadian problem? If it is such a major problem when it comes time to delivering on a campaign promise, why is it so easy to make these promises during the campaign? Perhaps the Tory Members who will speak after me today will clarify that for my benefit and yours.

Premier Peterson then said to the Prime Minister the following:

You have not solved the national problem, you are only transferring that national problem to us.

The Government of Canada has taken the problems it has with bailing out banks, foolish spending of funds and doling out patronage and handing them out to the provinces because it cannot handle them. It is shirking its federal responsibility, and that is unfair.

I want to quote now the Treasurer of the Province of Ontario, a man who has the respect of all Members of this House, I am sure. The Hon. Robert Nixon, Treasurer of Ontario and former Leader of the Liberal Party of Ontario, said the following:

There was uniform opposition to Ottawa's plan. Nobody thought it was a good idea.

That is the Treasurer of Ontario who said that. The Members across perhaps do not believe it because this statement was made by a Liberal, and that is just because they are so partisan.

Let me read to you what the Premier of New Brunswick said. He is certainly not a Liberal. There will be a Liberal Premier in New Brunswick very shortly, but at the present time Premier Hatfield said the following:

I will have no choice but to increase user fees for health services.

That is what a Conservative Premier said about the effects of this. If the Tories across from us are so partisan that they cannot listen to Liberal Premiers and the Liberal administration of the provinces, surely they will listen to Tory Premiers. It is the Conservative Party during the last election campaign which talked about co-operation and consultation with the provincial Governments. Where is that co-operation now? It is gone. It has disappeared. Maybe it was never there to start with.

We are talking about cuts that will affect universities. We are talking about cuts that will affect health care. The