

Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act

some level of social housing so they can be around to take advantage of secondary education opportunities, whether it is universities, federated Indian colleges, or community colleges. They said we do not have enough places to put these people. They wanted to know what the federal government policy was. They met with an official from the Minister's office this afternoon who blamed it on the provinces. When they met with the provinces, the provinces blamed it on the federal Government. It is called the old runaround.

More seriously, one of the contributing factors to the abhorrent spectacle we see in this province right now of doctors on strike is partly attributable to niggardly treatment by the federal Government starting in 1977 and continued by the present Government, and partly due to niggardly treatment by the provinces. I was on the scene in 1962 in Saskatchewan, and there is nothing new about what is going on in Ontario now. They lost then and they are going to lose now. I understand their arguments and I do not agree with them. However, for any Government, provincial or federal, or for any association like the Ontario Medical Association, to resort to methods which put people's lives at stake has to be and is an obscenity in a civilized society.

The Minister of Finance can bring in a Bill tomorrow which will take up one of the options we have offered. We will agree to put it through all stages in one day. It will have no effect on the deficit. It will maintain the 50-50 formula and earmark the taxes specifically for health care and secondary education. They could not be used for anything else. Of course, there is either evidence or suspicion that some provinces have been less than straightforward and honest about how they spend the money they get now. That tells me there is something wrong with the federal Government's auditing process. The Government has no one to blame but itself if some provinces did something else with the money. To let them get away with that is the fault of the federal administration and no one else.

The social costs of decisions made by this Government and by both private and public corporations return upon the provinces and the federal Government in other ways. I have only to illustrate the situation in Moncton. After listening to the management and officers of CN for three hours, I can tell you that a few years down the road the social costs, whether they be welfare or health treatment or secondary education or anything else, are going to fall on the backs of the municipalities in and around Moncton, the Province of New Brunswick, and federal taxpayers. The regime now in place, started by the Liberals and enlarged upon by the Conservatives, is a betrayal of what this Parliament did in the middle 1960s.

At that point we established a program which set an example for the world of how a nation of people working together can treat one another fairly and equitably no matter where they live or what their station in life is. I will not try and humour my friends on the Government side any longer. I am damned sick and tired of this. I put it to them point blank: Be as good as your word. If you are not going to stand by your word as a Party, or the word of your Prime Minister, you are

not deserving of any kind of charity or civilized treatment. You have lowered the standards of these programs because of your hysteria about a deficit. What you do not understand is that to keep people healthy and educated is not an expense, it is an investment. A healthy, well-educated and trained population will work, earn money and pay taxes. The Government will get more back in taxes at all levels than the original cost. That has been proven time and time again.

Retaining the 50-50 formula is not an expense or an increase in the deficit, it is an investment in our nation and its people. It is an investment that will pay off repeatedly. Surely to God this Parliament will be bigger than what this Bill says. Surely this Parliament and the Government will say we are men and women of our word. We are a Party of our word. We will live up to our word. If they do that, they will have the support of all sides of this House and of the people of Canada.

It is now time to tell Members opposite to get off their backsides and live up to their word. If they do not like a national compulsory health care plan, why not say so? Why not have the courage of your secret convictions and say so? Why do you say from one side of your mouth that we will return to the 1977 formula and from the other side say the opposite? Surely any self-respecting Progressive Conservative will say to himself: "I am not going to hold still for that." Fellows like Tommy Douglas, John Diefenbaker, Lester Pearson and Mr. Justice Emmett Hall, and scores of other people like them, brought about the 50-50 sharing among all the people of Canada. Surely we cannot let what they did go for nothing.

• (2140)

I hope this Government will reconsider, and if not today, in the last dying days of this session of Parliament. Other Governments have learned from their bitter experience. I want to be kind to my friends opposite. I hope they will change their minds or they are going to go through the same kind of bitter experience, and I plan on being here to see it happen.

Mr. Dingwall: Mr. Speaker, there are a number of comments one would want to make with regard to the remarks that have been made by my colleague from Regina West. Quite properly the Hon. Member has referred with great sincerity to the phrase integrity, in keeping one's word. We have seen in the First Ministers' Conference which was held in Halifax there was a clear consensus by the First Ministers of the day that there ought not to be reductions in the Established Programs Financing.

The premiers held that position because they believed the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney). They believed the Government would not at any time reduce the moneys for the fiscal year 1986-87. We have an example here of the Government breaking its word. It is equivalent to what the Government has done on another matter with regard to workers in Moncton, New Brunswick in breaking an undertaking that they had given to the workers with regard to the CN shops; another example of breaking one's word. I find that to be totally