

*Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act*

provide our youth with the education system they are entitled to and which they need because they will take over after us.

Mr. Speaker, my colleagues would surely appreciate that Conservative Members from Quebec would join with us so that Medicare remains the best health system, a system which provides any man or woman with the kind of medical attention then need so as to prevent uncertainty and any possible loss of life due to a lack of care, medical skills and training, as well as equipped hospitals which could save their life or make it "liveable". That is the kind of system we now enjoy in Canada, Mr. Speaker.

We must be proud of our system compared with those of the United States and many other countries... Just ask the Americans if they would not rather have that kind of medicare in their own country. Go ask Americans how much they have to pay when at 55 or 60 they suffer a heart attack. Ask them what are the consequences of having to pay the bill. Talk to young couples, to young American households when the wife gives birth to a baby! What are the costs incurred by that young couple at the onset of a career, trying to establish a family? Here, in Canada, we are lucky and if we are so privileged today, it's thanks to people before us who fought, made sacrifices, paid contributions and worked so we can enjoy everything we have. Today, these men and women are those we call the old age people, the elderly.

● (1920)

We know how understanding these Hon. Members and this Prime Minister are, they who benefit as I do from all the good things the elderly won for us. Is there sign of appreciation, of recognition, Mr. Speaker? If we list what this Government has done for senior citizens since September 4, in hardly 20 months, we realize this is the bottom line, a real shame.

Let me list them, Mr. Speaker. First, they deprived 80,000 senior citizens, aged 60 to 64, of an important program related to the old age security pension, the so-called spouse allowance.

Mr. Speaker, those 80,000 people all across Canada, 85 per cent of whom are women, those people living below the poverty line are now being denied in National Health and Welfare offices the spouse allowance that would give them an extra \$100 for a more decent living. Those women are being denied that program—and they are to be found in every constituency of every Canadian province—simply because they are single, separated or divorced. It is the only thing that disqualifies them. This Government, those Members did nothing in 2 years to correct a situation they themselves created.

As a second attack against the senior citizens, there was the de-indexing or the intent to cut off 3 per cent from the old age security pension. Mr. Speaker, all the Progressive Conservative Members rose in succession, starting with the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) and the minister of Finance (Mr. Wilson), to indicate they supported that.

Not one Conservative Member rose to defend them.

But when, a year ago on June 19, they came to Parliament Hill, and Mrs. Denis challenged the Prime Minister, then they were forced to bow to senior citizens. They were forced to recognize—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest):** Order, please. I regret to interrupt the hon. Member, but the period for speeches has now expired. Questions or comments. The hon. member for Ottawa—Vanier (Mr. Gauthier).

**Mr. Gauthier:** Mr. Speaker, first I want to congratulate my colleague from Montreal—Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart) who never fails to make a very good speech and give a very clear explanation of the issue, and ask him whether he would answer a simple question.

First I want to tell him that I agree with his statement that the federal Government transfers its deficit to the provinces through Bill C-96 by reducing the funds which had been promised to the provinces. I can give him the figures, but I am sure he knows them as well as I do. Between now and 1990-91 the federal Government will save close to \$6 billion by failing to honour its commitment to the provinces and by acting unilaterally.

I will read him a quotation from *Hansard*: "Taking the action of unilaterally cutting the financing, which the Government is now proposing, and then having some discussions with the provinces, surely puts the cart before the horse. We should be reversing this procedure". Michael Wilson, now Minister of Finance, but when he was an ordinary Member who said, and this appears in *Hansard* for March 22, 1982: putting the cart before the horse. Here is more: "The only sign it... ", the federal Government, "... shows of cutting spending is by shifting the burden of the established programs funding on to the provincial Governments." Another statement made by the Minister of Finance on March 23, 1982. I would ask the Hon. Member for Montreal—Sainte-Marie (Mr. Malépart) to explain to the House the impact this Bill will have on his province, the Province of Quebec, the \$2 billion which will be lost to the Province of Quebec, and to tell us his reaction to this rather significant loss.

**Mr. Malépart:** Mr. Speaker, my hon. colleague very appropriately mentioned that those people do not respect their word and their commitments. In the two texts that he mentioned, the attitude of the Minister of Finance, of this Prime Minister and of some Hon. Members is clearly evidenced with respect to what they said during the election campaign. Remember in Sherbrooke, Quebec, on the 26th of July, when that same Prime Minister promised to restore the full indexing, and a year and a half later he cut it and broke his promise. In the same place and at the same time he was promising elderly people that the New Horizons Program would be maintained with adequate funding.

Two years later, he has again broken his promise. He has just been cutting \$3 million in the same place, Mr. Speaker, and if you turn back to the press statement, you will see that in