

*Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act*

would be aware that he is not allowed to make reference to hon. members being present or absent.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** The Hon. Parliamentary Secretary's point is well taken. The Hon. Member for Renfrew—Nipissing—Pembroke (Mr. Hopkins) has the floor. Debate.

[English]

**Mr. Hopkins:** Mr. Speaker, there is another statement that was made, and I do not have it here, but I know it so well that I do not need to read it. That is the promise the Prime Minister of Canada (Mr. Mulroney) made to several thousand people in my constituency during the last election campaign dealing with the Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. community at Chalk River.

**Mr. Horner:** What's that got to do with it?

**Mr. Hopkins:** The relevancy is this: we are dealing with a Government that is lacking in credibility because it makes statements and then turns around and does the exact opposite. Today the Minister of Finance is doing the exact opposite of what he stated in the House in 1982. He is turning around and doing the very same thing he said Conservatives would not do as a Government.

The Prime Minister told Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. that not only would he retain its level of funding but indeed he would attempt to improve it and allow for further research and development. What did the Prime Minister do? The Minister of Finance helped him live up to his statement by cutting \$100 million out of the budget of Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. Not only that but it is going to end up costing 550 positions—

**Mr. Forrestall:** What is the relevancy?

**Mr. Hopkins:** Education enters into high-tech industries. If they wanted to be relevant, Mr. Speaker, government Members would not have made any one of those 338 promises that were made during the last election campaign. Even the promises they made not to do things are now being broken.

The Minister of Finance did indeed say in the House loud and clear and with a great deal of pride that the buck stops here. However, the buck stops here for the wrong reason. The buck stops here because the federal Government is shifting its responsibilities on to the shoulders of provincial and municipal Governments. That is wrong.

**Mr. Forrestall:** Do you want to know where it started, Len?

**Mr. Hopkins:** Instead, they have no trouble whatsoever, if I may continue to speak above the din of those who speak from their seats—

**Mr. Forrestall:** It goes back to Otto Lang and some of the others.

**Mr. Hopkins:** In all fairness, Mr. Speaker, I think you should be calling for a little order here.

**Mr. Forrestall:** You don't like that, do you, my dear friend? You don't like the truth. It hurts a little bit.

**Mr. Hopkins:** They bail out the banks to the tune of \$1 billion. They cut the provinces back by \$8 billion over the next six years. They break their promises to the provinces and to Atomic Energy of Canada Ltd. They slash the National Research Council. To a very large degree they are great educational and research facilities.

● (2000)

What is the Minister of Finance doing with medicare? He is cutting back on federal contributions to the provinces. I am one of those people who would be quite happy to see the federal Government being responsible for the medicare program across the country, if such an amendment to our Constitution were possible. Then the buck would have to stop here, and the Government would have to carry its load for the provinces of Canada.

Other speakers have mentioned that this piece of legislation will create different levels of medicare across Canada. To a large degree the quality of medicare at the provincial level depends upon the financial ability of the provinces to pay. However, the federal Government has levied heavier taxes than we have seen in years, if indeed ever, on to individual Canadians. It has levied taxes on small business, and those taxes will grow. In the crunch, the federal Government has actually levied more taxes upon the very sources upon which the provinces will in turn have to depend to obtain more money to operate the medicare and post-secondary educational systems. They will have to make up for the money the federal Government will not transfer to them in the next six years. For example, the Province of Ontario will lose nearly \$3 billion in transfer payments between now and 1992. It is passing the buck to the provinces by forcing them to increase their taxes.

I predict that the cut-back in transfer payments to the provinces and to the territories will mean, somewhere down the road, it will be necessary to appoint a commission similar to the Rowell-Sirois Commission which was appointed in 1937. The Rowell-Sirois Commission studied in depth federal-provincial financial arrangements in Canada and came up with some excellent recommendations. It is probably the best quality report in this area which has ever been produced in Canada; many reforms came out of it. The day will come when we will rise again in the House of Commons to debate amendments to Bill C-96 as a result of an in depth report of a future commission on federal-provincial financial arrangements with the provinces. I also believe that it will be necessary to amend the legislation to balance provincial finances which are being destroyed by the Bill before us today.

Many students are graduating from our universities today. In fact, many older people are returning to university for additional training in technical areas, arts, professions, and trades. They realize that they need additional upgrading and training. Indeed, there are those who will need future retraining in our educational system. The responsibility to educate all