

Again, that is exactly the situation we face today. The provinces have made commitments. Not knowing that the federal Government intended to introduce this legislation, the provinces made commitments to their universities, hospitals, doctors, nurses and others involved in the healthcare system. They negotiated contracts and passed their own budgets without knowing what the federal Government was contemplating. This is so because, as I said earlier, this cut-back was not announced in the May 23, 1985 Budget. As I also said earlier the documents the Minister of Finance tabled in the House which, of course, were immediately circulated to the Premiers and the provincial Ministers concerned with these matters, indicated there would not be a cut-back. Since there was no indication that there would be a cut-back, the provincial Governments had every reason to believe that the legislation passed by the House in the spring of 1982 would be honoured. It was thought that it would be honoured because the Conservative Party, while in opposition, had said that the cuts were drastic and should not have taken place. Having said that in opposition how can they now say that the cuts are justified, and make even further cuts now that they are in Government? It is against all reason. Based on the word of Conservatives and on the documents it tabled, the provincial Governments made their promises, plans and commitments because they assumed, with all the justification in the world, that there would be no change until at least April 1, 1987.

In the very words of the present Minister of Health, he is condemned for reliving what the Liberals did in 1981-82. However, he is not alone. There were others on the Conservative benches, some who are now cabinet Ministers, who spoke out against the Liberal cut-backs. The present Minister of Finance, the Hon. Member for Etobicoke Centre, said on March 24, 1982, that this was no time for unilateral action. He supported the suggestion made by the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands, the present Minister of Employment and Immigration, who suggested deferring a decision on the established program funding cuts for two years.

● (1150)

Why did the Minister who was then in Opposition say that we should defer a decision for two years? She said it because she felt it was important that the federal Government sit down with the provinces to work out an agreement. After all, as the Minister of Finance has said, that was not a matter for unilateral action but was something important.

The provinces have to pay for post-secondary education. The federal Government has to pay for post-secondary education. Others in society as well have to pay for post-secondary education. We all know it is important for our future to make sure that we have adequate funding for post-secondary education. We want the youth of Canada to have a chance to learn about computers and about humanity and to be able to deal with our ever-changing world.

The same thing can be said about medicare and hospitalization and the different programs we should be developing in this

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area. Again, it is the federal Government, the provinces and others in society that pay for these services. Yet for some reason the former Liberal Government and now the Conservative Government believe that the federal Government can make a unilateral statement by saying: "We are going to cut back our funding, boys and girls, and we are not going to consult with you. We are going to do it and it is up to you to pick up the pieces". That is so insane. It is politically insensitive. It is reminiscent of an arrogance which many Canadians thought they had gotten rid of on September 4, 1984.

The new Conservative Government is acting arrogantly. It lacks in any concern for the provinces and for adequate funding for medicare and post-secondary education. It is so arrogant that it can turn its back, not only on what Conservative Members said in 1981 and 1982 but on the very election promises they made in the summer of 1984. What is the use of going through the electoral process? What is the use of making promises to certain groups?

Conservative Members made promises to university students and professors indicating that, not only would they not cut back funding to post-secondary education but they would re-establish funding that had been taken away from it by the Liberals. Yet here we are in the House of Commons right now debating a Bill which will take even more funding from post-secondary education and medical services. How can Conservative Members justify that?

Let us see what else the Minister of Finance said when he attacked the Liberals for their unilateral action. Referring to the Liberal Government, he said:

It now wants to shift the problem over to the provinces, it wants to shift the deficit problem . . . at the federal level down to the provincial level.

He condemned the Liberals then for doing exactly what he is doing today. When he finally told the House of Commons what he was up to, the Minister of Finance said that he was doing this to reduce the deficit. That is the same thing Allan MacEachen said in 1981 and 1982. At that time, the now Minister of Finance denounced that and said that there is absolutely no use in shifting the deficit from the federal Government to the provincial Government; yet he is doing the very thing today through Bill C-96.

Again, as reported in *Hansard* of March 23, 1982, the Minister of Finance, when he was an Hon. Member of the Opposition, said the following:

The provinces are now moving into a deficit position, a position which will make it more difficult for them to finance this shift in spending.

At that time, the Minister of Finance was accurate. A number of the provinces did not have deficits, including the previous NDP government of Saskatchewan; a number of the provinces had very low deficits. At that time, the Minister of Finance, when he was in Opposition, said that the provinces were starting to build up deficits and if the Liberal federal Government would cut back on funding it would increase the deficits of the provinces. Indeed, that is what happened. He also said that it would be more difficult for the provinces to