

Point of Order—Mr. Herbert

[English]

POINT OF ORDER

MR. HERBERT—MOTION FOR PAPERS NO. 85—ALLEGED NON-COMPLIANCE WITH HOUSE ORDER

Madam Speaker: Before I reach orders of the day, I would like to reply to the point of order brought forward by the hon. member for Vaudreuil (Mr. Herbert). If the hon. member feels the documents which were tabled are incomplete, it is not incumbent upon the Speaker to determine whether they are complete. If the hon. member feels there are documents which should have been tabled, he may seek redress by proposing a new notice of motion for those documents.

Mr. Hal Herbert (Vaudreuil): Madam Speaker, it puts us in some difficulty. The reason I rose on the point of order rather than raising a question of privilege is that I was aware there was at least one document, which I have personally seen, which was not included in the package. The difficulty, of course, is that under other circumstances one can never be sure whether one is receiving the total package. Now, under existing conditions I can produce a document which will illustrate that everything that was supposed to be tabled in this House was not in fact tabled; but I seek your guidance because I find it a most difficult situation. A member might be in the very difficult position of either not knowing everything which is supposed to be in the package, or, because in my case I know there is at least one document not in the package, suspecting that there may be others. If I raise the point again I do not see what it achieves in the final analysis.

Madam Speaker: Well, the Chair is obviously in the same difficulty as the hon. member. How can the Chair determine if all the documents have been tabled? I gave my guidance to the hon. member; he may make a new motion for the tabling of documents in the hope that he will get those documents which he is certain exists and which have not been tabled.

Mr. Herbert: Madam Speaker, I reserve a question of privilege for tomorrow when I will have the document in my hand.

Madam Speaker: There is no question of privilege. If the hon. member wants to get more documents, the way to proceed is to make a new motion for the tabling of documents.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[English]

**FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL FISCAL ARRANGEMENTS
AND ESTABLISHED PROGRAMS FINANCING ACT,
1977****MEASURE TO AMEND**

The House resumed from Tuesday, March 23, consideration of the motion of Mr. MacEachen that Bill C-97, to amend the

Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements and Established Programs Financing Act, 1977, and to provide for payments to certain provinces, be read the second time and referred to the Standing Committee on Finance, Trade and Economic Affairs.

Hon. Michael Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Madam Speaker, last night at ten o'clock I indicated that I felt it was a major backward step on the part of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) to state that co-operative federalism was dead. I said that because I felt it displayed a total lack of sensitivity towards the different regions of this country and a lack of understanding of the problem of increasing regionalism, and not just in Canada, although that is very much a factor in our country. However, it is also a growing phenomenon in many other countries of the world as well. Against this broad background it is no time for unilateral action within Canada and no time for confrontation. It is no time for unilaterally forcing cuts in the established programs funding when we have ten provinces unanimously opposed to this proposal.

Yesterday my colleague, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald), suggested deferring a decision on the established programs funding cuts for two years, and she will be proposing an amendment to this effect. One good reason for such a proposal is the confusion over the figures we are talking about here. The Minister of Finance (Mr. MacEachen) indicated in the budget that the net cuts for all provinces were of the order of \$1.9 billion. About two weeks later he and his officials acknowledged there was a mistake; the net cuts were something of the order of \$2.5 billion. About a month after that we heard reports that the net cuts were much larger than that, something like \$4.5 billion.

● (1510)

We have been trying to get an answer from the Minister of Finance to a certain question. On budget night, he was prepared to force a cut in financing on the provinces amounting to \$1.9 billion net, then, two weeks later, amounting to \$2.5 billion, and amounting to \$4.5 billion a month later. How can the minister propose continuing on this path when he knows that that substantial increase in cuts was much more than he had previously anticipated and much more than he had made his plans on? That is one of the very key problems which must be reviewed during this two-year period that my colleague has proposed.

There is another factor here. Taking the action of unilaterally cutting the financing, which the government is now proposing, and then having some discussions with the provinces,