

We keep hearing the criticism that we argue that it is not a cut-back. The federal Government will be transferring some \$90 billion over the next five years to the provinces. That is a \$25 billion gain from the present \$65 billion level. I call that a magnificent gain. That is an average of some 5 per cent throughout the period.

I will come back to the points I was making a few moments ago in case they were not observed. Canadians expect that in all of our programs we should get our house in order collectively. For instance, I am not aware of the exact way that many universities are run, but the Hon. Member will know that from time to time corporations have to stop and examine their internal efficiency, how the money is spent, whether in travelling expenses, entertainment, or perhaps in too many departments or chief executive officers. Perhaps the pay scales are too high. There are 101 areas one can look at. I would hope the Hon. Member would agree that some universities and post-secondary institutions might be able to find some savings and some inefficiencies might be identified. However, tough decisions are being made day in and day out. None of us were pleased to hear recently that the School of Architecture at the University of Toronto may not have sufficient funding to continue. That school has existed for something like 100 years. But what has brought these tough decisions to the fore is the track record of the Official Opposition for a ten-year period.

Mr. Allmand: Baloney. Nobody believes that.

Mr. Attewell: Had we taken over government with a surplus, we would not even think about the measures we are now discussing in Bill C-96. It is that simple.

Mr. Allmand: Who would believe that.

Mr. Frith: They wouldn't believe you for two minutes.

Mr. Attewell: The Hon. Member asks who would believe it. Thousands of Canadians believe it. The Liberal Government has led us down the garden path. So we have had to make tough decisions. But Canadians expect us to face these problems in a sensitive way, whether it be hospital care or post-secondary education, and not to turn our back on them. We intend to face these problems to the best of our ability.

[Translation]

Mr. Garneau: Mr. Speaker, I should have liked the Hon. Member for Don Valley East (Mr. Attewell) to answer my question which was quite clear. Would the Hon. Member try again and tell me how it was that in 1981-82, his party which at that time was aware of the financial situation, objected so strongly to changes in the formula, especially the guarantee of tax revenues which was a very complicated formula based on a flow of statistics that was practically beyond any control? Why did his party object at that time? Payments should have been extended and, today, they have changed their attitude. Has it seen the light on the road to Damascus but I would rather like to know whether Ontario can be deprived of 75 hospital beds

Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act
and lose \$3 billion while making such services available to its citizens? Does he believe it is possible?

[English]

Mr. Attewell: Mr. Speaker, with all due respect to the Hon. Member, what we had during the term of the former Government was a moving target. We were not able to get accurate financial estimates from that Government.

Mr. Gauthier: Oh, oh!

Mr. Attewell: Budgets were being changed hours before they were presented in the House. Estimates were continually rising. All Hon. Members will remember the period when the Budget started with a low \$20 billion and after the fourth estimate we were zeroing in on something like \$30 billion. How can we do intelligent financial planning with that sort of moving target?

I must say it is a pleasant change to move into a record we can point to with pride. Our Minister of Finance pointed to a deficit months and months ago and said that he would be targetting at the \$34.8 billion level, and we are going to come in at exactly that level. The Minister of Finance has forecast a deficit of under \$30 billion next year, and we hope to hit that level as well. That is a far different record from the record of the previous Government, now the Official Opposition. The Hon. Member knows from working in business that one's decisions are only as good as the financial base and data one has. We now, I believe, have sound data and that is why we can make some reasonably sound predictions.

Hon. Douglas C. Frith (Sudbury): Mr. Speaker, before commencing my remarks this afternoon, I would like to say that it seems to me, after having sat through three interventions by Conservative back-bench Members of Parliament—and I qualify “back-bench”—that we are in danger of having this debate deteriorate rapidly into a variation of the Marie Antoinette theme of “let them eat cake”. Clearly the Conservative Party has a totally different concept of the cornerstone of Confederation.

Before getting into the specifics of the debate, I would like perhaps, for the benefit of us all in the Chamber, to speak about the definition by a former Prime Minister of Great Britain. A century or so ago Prime Minister Disraeli defined Conservatism as “organized hypocrisy”.

Mr. Gauthier: Hear, hear! It is still true today.

Mr. Frith: Clearly not much has changed in the intervening years. Perhaps I might add to that comment made a century and a half ago by indicating that Conservatives today represent disorganized hypocrisy. I say that in all sincerity. The Canadian public has come to the conclusion that politicians cannot be trusted in what they say. There now exists in Canada, I believe, unheard of heights of cynicism with respect to politics. Why is it that the level of cynicism toward the political process and politicians has reached such new heights? I put forward for your consideration, Mr. Speaker, that