

Oral Questions

has occurred in the past number of years in the amount of support for post-secondary education by the province of Ontario and try to get it to do its bit.

● (1450)

MINISTER'S ACTIONS

Hon. Flora MacDonald (Kingston and the Islands): Madam Speaker, I would refer the Secretary of State to page 2902 of the Senate *Hansard* of October 27 of this year where Senator Perrault is reported to have stated, when referring to the \$1.5 billion continuous reduction:

Honourable senators, this is the response provided by the Minister of Finance.

I would like to ask whether or not the Secretary of State has spoken to the Minister of Finance who has, at various times, made it very clear that there will be a \$1.5 billion lowering of commitments to the provinces, to the community colleges and universities and to health care in the amount of money transferred by the federal government? Has he talked to the Minister of Finance about that, and has he and will he look at the Senate record, and will he then, on the basis of his previous statement, agree to put in his resignation from the point of view that he has said there would be no reduction coming up?

Hon. Gerald Regan (Secretary of State): No, Madam Speaker. The hon. member, of course, is one of the most practiced practitioners of twisting around facts and figures. I do not know how many hours, when she should be making representations to the Ontario government to do its bit towards education, she spends in searching through *Hansard* to try to find a misprint somewhere so that she can misquote somebody.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Regan: But I do tell her this, that what I said elsewhere, what I said here and will say again, is that I am highly confident that there will not be any \$1.5 billion reduction in the support of post-secondary education.

Some hon. Members: How much?

Mr. Regan: I will also tell her this—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: Order, please. I cannot hear the answer, so I expect a lot of members cannot hear it.

Mr. Regan: I do want to say, Madam Speaker, that I am distressed to see such an element of glee on her part in the possibility of a reduction in educational support when she represents a city like Kingston.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

STATEMENT MADE BY GOVERNMENT LEADER IN SENATE

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, my question is for the Acting Prime Minister.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: I will wait until the howling stops on the other side, Madam Speaker.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Clark: Madam Speaker, was the government House Leader in the Senate speaking the policy of the government when he made the statement just quoted by my colleague, the hon. member for Kingston and the Islands?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, obviously in view of what has been said I will have to look into that. The Prime Minister would certainly want to give the answer himself.

STATEMENTS MADE BY MINISTER OF FINANCE

Right Hon. Joe Clark (Leader of the Opposition): Madam Speaker, could the Acting Prime Minister tell us whether the Minister of Finance was speaking the policy of the government when he said on several occasions that there would be a reduction of \$1.5 billion?

Mr. Ouellet: Ask him the question directly.

Mr. Clark: The minister, Madam Speaker, who spends most of his time advising judges, or advising small-business men to get along without the Post Office, is offering some free advice to me.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: He is best known as the minister who digs holes in Quebec and he is digging them for himself.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. Clark: If I could have a little quiet in the House with some of the shouting stopped on the other side—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: You are not the Speaker; sit down.

Madam Speaker: Order, please.

Mr. Clark: Was the Minister of Finance speaking the policy of the government when he said, as he has on several occasions, that there will be a reduction in the neighbourhood of \$1.5 billion in payments under the established programs financing to the provinces and, if not, what will the reduction be?

Hon. Jean-Luc Pepin (Minister of Transport): Madam Speaker, I think the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs made a lot of sense a moment ago when he observed that the Minister of Finance has been here every day since the opening of the House of Commons.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!