

Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act

propensity to launch an attack on those who unfortunately have no alternative but to live with those cuts.

We have now before us, Mr. Speaker, an amendment which in the circumstances seems very reasonable to me. It reads:

"This House refuses to continue the consideration of this Bill, the purpose of which is to unilaterally reduce federal payments to the provinces for post-secondary education and health services which are essential.

This does not seem to be an unreasonable suggestion, but I regret to say that we are alone with the New Democratic Party in raising the issues. And we are being faced with a shameless, shocking stonewalling by those whose role should be to defend and represent the interests of their respective provinces.

The proposal as it now stands is to effect a colossal \$8 billion cut, and we have a flock of Members who, although they are a large number, let everything go by without any reaction, representation, or comment whatsoever. Besides, as indicated earlier by my colleagues, not a single Minister had the courage and fortitude to rise and attempt in any way to defend the provinces which, in the circumstances, are being led to an extremely significant impoverishment.

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte Marie): Mr. Speaker, the people who are listening to us are probably disappointed and even discouraged at the attitude of the Conservatives. Mr. Speaker, this Bill is very important, not only for our institutions and for our provinces, but also for the people in each of our constituencies. The purpose of this Bill is to reduce the amounts allocated to two extremely important sectors of which most people have benefited in the past, namely health care and education.

Mr. Speaker, egoistically, like the Prime Minister (Mr. Mulroney) himself, and without telling the truth, this Government has decided unilaterally to reduce payments to the provinces for health care and education.

Mr. Speaker, who is now being held hostage by a Government which, a while ago, introduced legislation to help people with deposits of over \$60,000 in certain banks? After this, we might well ask: What does being a Conservative mean? Who do the Conservatives represent? They represent the wealthy, Mr. Speaker. Once more, we have a Bill which clearly shows the attitude, the incompetence, the ignorance, the carelessness of the Conservatives because no Conservative from Quebec has risen to speak. In 1979, when the Liberals, with the help of the New Democratic Party, defeated the Conservative Government, six Members of Parliament from Quebec, six Members of the Social Credit, did what the Conservatives are now doing and refused to stand up. At the following elections, they were defeated and rejected so that there is no longer a single Social Credit Member in this House, Mr. Speaker.

I have just come back from a tour of Quebec in Trois-Rivières, Saint-Hyacinthe, Quebec City—

An Hon. Member: There were not forty of you.

Mr. Malépart: I see that they are beginning to wake up, Mr. Speaker. The Hon. Member for Lotbinière—

An Hon. Member: He will be back.

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, if Jean-Guy Dubois, the excellent Member for Lotbinière, were here, he would have risen to defend the people of Quebec. He would not have left to give his President a bloody nose; he would have remained in this House to defend the population. This is what he would have done.

An Hon. Member: More.

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, let us see what impact this Bill will have if the Conservatives from all regions of Canada do not wake up. Our senior citizens will have to pay for the care they receive in hospitals or they will be refused admission to hospital because the provinces will not have enough funds to provide adequate services. Our young people are being abandoned and they do not have jobs because of the incompetence of this Government. Our youth will be even more disappointed now as the costs of post-secondary education will increase.

Mr. Speaker, if the Hon. Member who has just shouted could rise and speak to defend the interests of his constituents . . . Mr. Speaker, that is what those people cannot do.

Mr. Tremblay (Lotbinière): You have been away.

Mr. Malépart: Yes, Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Lotbinière says I was away on a trip. I was on a trip in the Quebec City area, in your region, Mr. Speaker, in the riding of Saint-Hyacinthe and in Trois-Rivières, to defend the interests of early retirees whose unemployment insurance benefits were savagely cut by your Government, Mr. Speaker. I was paying my own way on this trip, to defend the people of Lotbinière who don't have a Member to defend them here in the House.

An Hon. Member: Resign!

Mr. Malépart: Mr. Speaker, we have the people of Quebec City and Mrs. Lalonde who defends the rights of people in need, who asked me to rise in the House to defend them because there is no Member, not even a Minister in Quebec City to defend their rights—

Mr. Speaker, this is all very distressing. I remember newly elected Conservative Members saying that first day: It is our turn now. And I am sure some of them got elected for the sake of the patronage jobs they could hand out. I am sure that was their primary motive. Some even wrote a nice letter to their constituents saying that if they wanted their name on a contract they would have to do this and they would have to do that. But they never mentioned Bill C-96. They never said they would be cutting the indexation of Old Age Security pensions or levying a tax on drugs, Mr. Speaker. They were interested