

*Federal-Provincial Fiscal Arrangements Act*

This Government was elected, as I say, because the Canadian people thought the time had come for a change. But they were not expecting such cutbacks in those expenditures. The Government made a clear commitment. They even attacked us, as it was their right to do it, and I will always remember that debate in January 1984, if my memory serves me right. You were there, Mr. Speaker, and you delivered very serious attacks against the Government.

At that time, we were criticized both by the present Minister of Employment and Immigration (Miss MacDonald) and very, very harshly by no other than the very able Chairman of the Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs, the Hon. Member for Mississauga South (Mr. Blenkarn), who suggested then that there was a breach of contract. He added—of course he was in opposition at that time—that health care and education programs came under the jurisdiction of the provinces and that the latter should be consulted.

I attended that debate. It went on and on, and you were there, Mr. Speaker. I even remember at that time you were looking at me and you were nodding in approval when your colleagues blamed us for backtracking on promises, as we wanted to do at that time, because of things we wanted to have done, because of promises broken at that time.

In view of all those attacks by the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands (Miss MacDonald), the Hon. Member for Wetaskiwin (Mr. Schellenberger), Alberta, and the Hon. Member for Brandon—Souris (Mr. Clark) . . . I remember very well, as does my colleague and friend the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Hnatyshyn), those attacks against our Government as democracy would have it. And what are they doing today, after having promised solemnly—I repeat, solemnly—in Sherbrooke never to do such a thing?

You know that, since yesterday, I have developed the habit of showing documents like that, because, having watched TV—I hope I will be allowed this remark as an aside—I cannot help thinking of what we have seen yesterday from the Hon. Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion (Mr. Stevens); the document he was holding at 2 p.m. had become a single sheet at 3 p.m.. That is why I have some difficulty—

On the one hand, Mr. Speaker, the Government has broken the definite promise that was made in Sherbrooke during the election campaign not to make any cut in the expenditures. We now have a total reversal of the situation, considering all the speeches which had been made as recently as January 1984 by a multitude of Hon. Members who were sitting in the Opposition at the time.

I am somewhat ill at ease when, having examined the figures very closely, I realize the extent of the losses. I point this out to my Quebec colleagues in particular, because, after all, I am not an Ottawa Member in Quebec, I am a Quebec Member in Ottawa. Therefore I owe it to myself to represent the interests

of my province when they are being threatened, as I have always done even when we were in office.

Mr. Speaker, my province stands to lose close to \$2 billion for health care alone. The loss will also be considerable in the post-secondary education sector. Where will the Province of Quebec find the money to make up for the funds it was supposed to get from the federal Government? How can a province as poor as Newfoundland which will lose \$187 million over the next few years . . . And Prince Edward Island, Mr. Speaker, the strength of Canada stems from mutual assistance between poorer and richer provinces, yesterday's richer provinces may very well be poorer tomorrow, just as yesterday's poorer provinces may be tomorrow's richer provinces. This is what mutual assistance in Canada is all about, Canadian understanding, the spirit of federal-provincial conferences. That small province will have to make do with \$40 million less in the health and post-secondary education sector alone.

Nova Scotia will be deprived of \$282 million. Your own province, Mr. Speaker, will receive \$773 million less.

Mr. Speaker, I think it is the duty of Opposition Members to impress upon their colleagues from their own province the fact that such cutbacks will put the Government of Quebec in a very precarious situation, as they will be the other provincial administrations. It is quite obvious. We know the Hon. Member for Brome—Missisquoi (Mrs. Bertrand) said that we are faced with a difficult situation. She is right, but that does not justify her unloading the problem on others. There should be a co-operation between the two, since these agreements had been reached together, and I feel that it is together that they should be discussed and discussed again.

Mr. Speaker, I notice that you are signaling to me, and as always, I will obey the Chair. As I interpret your smile as a sort of permission, I will try to conclude in an intelligent way.

First of all, I find it regrettable that the Government should try to gag the Opposition on such an important and significant Bill. We will therefore look into it again in committee, and we will spend more time debating it at the third reading stage. I find regrettable that the Federal Government should ask others to shoulder the deficit without getting them together to address the issue. Mr. Speaker, I can assure you that tomorrow Canada will be less generous than it is today in the areas of health care and post-secondary education which are so very important for the future of young Canadians whom we must protect, because they are Canada's real wealth, and it is not by cutting post-secondary education funding that we will have this wealth and this country envied by all.

**Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Montreal—Sainte-Marie):** Mr. Speaker, it gives me pleasure to speak on such an important matter for Quebec. In the presence of one, two, three, four, five, six, seven . . . They do not even know what I want to say, Mr. Speaker.