

Federal Transfers to Provinces

in mind the many representations and the many incidents witnessed by Quebecers, we can count on the fingers of one hand the good things that were to come out of Ottawa. Be that as it may, Mr. Speaker, we are obviously waging a war of words and statistics which has just begun, in my opinion, and I think we should try to listen to Quebecers such as those I meet in my riding of Lotbinière who are getting tired of listening to people who keep repeating that anything that comes from Ottawa is no good and that only the government of Quebec does the right thing at the right time. I will come to that later on in my speech when dealing with statistics and I will indeed give the figures, the amounts of money which the people of Quebec pay to us and get back from us. Quebecers will realize just what the situation is and especially the ever larger amounts of money paid to the province of Quebec by the Canadian Government. A good many people will say that those payments are taxes paid by Quebecers and to which they are entitled. Fair enough, Mr. Speaker. I am one of those who benefit from taxes paid by Quebecers, but I hasten to add that in light of the figures which may be quoted later on it will be seen that, given their population and the amounts of money they receive, Quebecers happen to be in a situation which is quite different from what we are led to believe.

• (1650)

The new arrangements will effectively protect the provinces receiving equalization payments against any sharp decrease in their payments following a change in their financial position. They will also take into account representations made by the provinces. The yearly increase in equalization payments after 1982-83 will be geared to the growth rate of the GNP, the data for 1982 being used as a basis for the computation.

As I said earlier, let us quote a few figures to determine what amounts Quebecers may expect to receive under the new fiscal arrangements provided for in Bill C-97. This year, as of March 31, Quebec has received \$20.4 billion. However, under the provisions of the bill now before the House with regard to fiscal arrangements and established programs financing, Quebec will receive \$35,234 million out of a total of \$105,544 million. Which means that Quebec, with approximately one fourth of the Canadian population, will receive one third of Ottawa's fiscal transfers; moreover, the payments made to Quebec will increase gradually by as much as \$5,557 million in 1982-83 up to \$8,682 million in 1986-87. The figures indicate a gradual progression. Let us consider what Quebec has received for the period ending March 31, 1982; it has received \$20.4 billion, or roughly a third of the total fiscal transfers. Today, under this bill, this proportion is maintained and the increase is nearly \$15,234 million for the period ending March 31, 1982. What do you make, Mr. Speaker, of all these accusations that Quebecers have nobody in Ottawa to represent them when you see all the money they are getting?

In equalization payments alone, Quebec will receive \$2,306 million in 1981-82. Under this new bill, it will receive \$2,552

million in 1982-83. A projection shows that Quebec should receive \$3,831 million in 1986-87. Mr. Speaker, these figures are quite significant and telling about the federal government's contribution to post-secondary education and health care. And I would like to insist on the figure situation, giving as much explanation as possible, to stress that such federal contributions to health and post-secondary education programs under the legislation will total \$11.7 billion in 1982-83, a \$1.2 billion increase over the current year. As far as Quebec is concerned, and this is where figures are important, such contributions will rise from \$2.7 billion this year to \$3 billion in 1982-83, a \$300 million or 10 per cent increase.

How many Quebecers were quite surprised to hear recently, since negotiations started, about participation in an area where it is said, or rather the Constitution provides, that the provinces have jurisdiction over education. But on the other hand, they are quite happy about the Canadian government's contribution to post-secondary education. They are quite happy to receive those moneys, but there should be no reference to it because we will be attacked here in Parliament because we look for visibility. Well, this is quite normal, in my view. How could a government contributing very substantially, to the extent of nearly 60 per cent in fact, to post-secondary education in Canada not ask Canadians, Quebecers, to recognize such a contribution to our post-secondary education? I think this is most important. And as I said, this year there will be \$2,711 million, in 1982-83; \$3 billion; in 1983-84, \$3,375 million and so forth, until 1986-87 when it will be \$4,851 million.

This may be a lot of figures, but concerning those figures, Quebecers should be told that despite the current situation in Quebec they are receiving a large part of the fiscal transfers, and on the face of such increases over the period ending March 31, 1982, let them not have Quebecers believe during the coming weeks that if there are tax increases as it has been rumoured for some months, that it is due to the Canadian government. Because when the facts on transfers are examined, the figures I just gave, it will be seen that \$35,234 million, or a third of the fiscal transfers go to a quarter of the people. How many Quebecers have been told since 1976: We account for a quarter of the people, we do not receive a quarter of fiscal transfers, we do not have our fair share of fiscal transfers? Well, the actual share is a third of fiscal transfers.

Looking at the over-all situation, under equalization Quebec will be receiving 54 per cent of the transfers, or close to \$16 billion over the five-year period, out of a total \$29 billion. That contribution to equalization is part of the building of our Canadian federation under the principle that certain have-not provinces need more than others. And what is more natural considering the conditions that existed in the thirties when western Canada was facing serious financial difficulties and eastern Canada contributed to its development. Today, provinces such as Alberta are very rich as a result of their oil