areas the valuable and economical health services now being provided?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I sympathize very much with the problem put forward by the hon. member, especially in his own area, but the hon. member should realize that under the law, the federal government must contribute 50 per cent of hospital operation expenses and that the federal government, and I, as minister, have no authority to do what the hon. member suggests in his question—unfortunately.

INQUIRY WHETHER ONTARIO RECEIVING THE FULL FIFTY PER CENT CONTRIBUTION

Mr. W. C. Scott (Victoria-Haliburton): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Wealth and—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

An hon. Member: Wealth and Helfare.

Mr. Scott: Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Is the province of Ontario receiving under the present formula the 50 per cent it was promised when it came into the contract? Is it receiving that amount in respect of present day medicare expenditures?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I can assure the hon. member that the province of Ontario receives every dollar and cent to which it is entitled under the law. The money is provided under the Hospital Insurance and Diagnostic Services Act by way of agreements with the province of Ontario. I have never had a complaint about this from the province of Ontario since my appointment as Minister of National Health and Welfare or, for that matter, from any other part of the country.

Mr. Scott: Mr. Speaker, may I ask the minister a supplementary question? Does the minister not agree that under the formula now used, the province of Ontario is receiving less than 50 per cent of its actual cost?

Mr. Lalonde: Mr. Speaker, the province of Ontario is receiving exactly what it is entitled to under the law passed by this parliament. The law provides for a cost-sharing formula for hospital operations, under the Hospital Insurance and Diagnostic Services Act. The province of Ontario has never complained that it is not getting every penny to which it is entitled.

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FISHERIES

DECISION ON DREDGING VEDDER RIVER IN BRITISH COLUMBIA—REQUEST FOR REPORT

Mr. Alex Patterson (Fraser Valley East): Mr. Speaker, may I direct my question to the minister in charge of fisheries? In view of the imminent spring run-off and consequential threat of further flooding in the Fraser Valley, what decision has the minister's department taken with respect to requests for necessary dredging of the Vedder River in the municipality of Chilliwack?

[Mr. Douglas (Bruce-Grey).]

Hon. Roméo LeBlanc (Minister of State (Fisheries)): Mr. Speaker, I thought that, after consultations, this matter had been sorted out. I will check into it and inform the hon. member. I am sure that he will accept that we must protect spawning grounds.

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BILINGUALISM

REASON FOR NOT CONTINUING FUNDING OF EXPERIMENTAL PROGRAM FOR SECOND LANGUAGE TRAINING

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, my question to the Secretary of State arises from the announcement with respect to the termination of funding to school boards for second language training in the national capital area. As Mr. Spicer, commissioner of official languages, suggested that we ought to emphasize language training in our school system, perhaps as opposed to emphasizing it in the Public Service of Canada, will the minister explain the contradiction inherent in the dropping of this program, when it had been generally agreed by all parties that it was one of the finest programs the minister's department has brought forth? Dropping the program will jeopardize the future of those in the national capital area already involved in the immersion program.

Hon. James Hugh Faulkner (Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, there has been no termination of funding, in the sense that the formula payments will apply to the national capital region, as they apply across the country. This involves the federal government paying 9 per cent of the cost per student in an extended French program. What has come to an end is an experimental program which the boards of education and the province of Ontario agreed, in the beginning, would be a two-year program. Last year they came to me and said, "Listen, we have not completed the experiment; would you help us through a third year?" I agreed. Therefore, the suggestion that we have now terminated the formula payments or payments for the support of extended French training in the national capital region is false.

Mr. Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I concede that it was an experimental program and extended. Judging from the reaction of the boards, there is a necessity for its continuation. As the program will cost about $4 million, whereas the government is prepared to spend $8 million refurbishing the East Block, and as this language program in the national capital area may be the forerunner of similar programs in other parts of Canada if it is allowed to continue, would the minister consider giving the program as high a priority as the government is giving the refurbishing of the East Block?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.