

Oral Questions

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, again there are so many wrong statements in the hon. lady's question that I will have to take them one by one. There is no question of a cutback by six and five per cent. What is being discussed is an increase of six and five per cent in the payments to the Provinces under post-secondary education payments by the federal Government.

I remind the hon. lady that several Conservative Provinces have planned increases in post-secondary education of less than six and five per cent. She should bear this in mind.

Second, the payments are going to be made under the formula which has been traditionally in operation. The only difference is that they would be increased by six and five per cent. There is no reason to believe that this would lead to unequal increases between Provinces.

I would remind the hon. lady that if we were to reach any such conclusion—and I have discussed this with my colleagues—it would be on the basis also of an increase over and above what was paid this year, when there was, indeed, a very large increase in enrolment in post-secondary education. In this case, there is a very large base from which to start.

Also, I would like to point out to the hon. lady that the federal Government has also increased substantially the amount it is allocating to young people, particularly students, whether it is in the form of summer jobs, where we have increased the amount of money going to young people this summer from \$120 million to \$170 million. The moneys allocated under the National Training Program have also been increased very substantially, so our young people will be better equipped to cope with the job market in the years to come.

FUNDING OF HEALTH CARE

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, my question is also directed to the Minister of Finance. The Minister will know that we have had an increase of 4 per cent in the unemployment rate in the last year. That kind of unemployment rate increase is accompanied by an increase in the demand on the health care system. Stress related illnesses have grown by approximately 20 per cent in the last year, and those illnesses include heart attacks, ulcers, and alcoholism.

The Minister indicated that he has no plans for an increase in payments for health care. Does he believe that that statement is justified when in fact demands on the health care system are growing? Should he not be considering, with other First Ministers, an increase in money for the health care system, and should that not be substantial?

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Yes, Madam Speaker, and this is exactly what we are going to do. I do not know whether the Hon. Member was in the House when the Hon. Member for Kingston and the Islands asked a question

about health payments. I indicated then that our payments under health care program will increase very substantially next year, and that the existing arrangements which we have with the Provinces are going to continue without any change at all next year. Therefore, our contribution to health care in this country is going to continue to be very, very significant, indeed, in the billions of dollars every year. That is what is taking place at the present time and will continue next year. No change is planned.

REQUEST FOR INCREASED FUNDING

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Madam Speaker, to be too precise sometimes is to attempt to mislead the House. The planned increases, according to Bill C-97, are to take care of inflation. I am speaking about an increase in demand which is caused by the Government's bad economic policy. Demand goes up as well as inflation. I am asking whether or not there will be any consideration by Cabinet, those backbenchers over there, which will provide an increased amount of money to the health care system in real dollars, not just inflationary dollars? Will you meet that demand with money?

[*Translation*]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of Finance): Madam Speaker, I shall try answering in French, since the Hon. Member seems to have misunderstood the answer I gave in English. I pointed out that the Government of Canada is spending billions of dollars on contributions to health care in Canada. Under our agreements with the provinces, the amounts are increased each year according to a formula that ensures the provinces are receiving an annual and very substantial increase in the funds they receive for health services. Under this formula, which will be maintained, the amounts received by the provinces in the coming year will be even greater than what they received in previous years. Therefore, the Canadian Government's contribution to health care for Canadians, including hospital services and medical care, will continue to increase in the years to come.

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

PRESENCE IN GALLERY OF DELEGATION OF BELGIAN
PARLIAMENTARIANS

Madam Speaker: I have the honour of drawing the attention of the House to the distinguished presence in our gallery of a delegation of Belgian Parliamentarians headed by Mr. Jean Defraigne, Speaker of the Belgian House of Representatives.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!