

Supply

Bill C-76 maintains national health care standards while taking away all transfer payments and introduces new standards in social assistance and postsecondary education. If the provinces do not meet these standards, their funds will be cut off by Bill C-76.

This arrogant kind of federalism does not decentralize powers in any way, as these national standards will limit the autonomy of the provinces in their own areas of jurisdiction. In addition, Quebec's distinct society will not recognize itself in the new national standards implemented from coast to coast in a sector as important to its cultural identity as education.

In fact, many observers and analysts have confirmed that Bill C-76 relegates the provinces to a purely advisory role and does not give them a veto on the introduction of new national standards in their own areas of jurisdiction. For example, in an editorial published in *Le Devoir*, Lise Bissonnette says this: "Bill C-76 treats postsecondary education as a social program and allows Ottawa to apply national standards in this and other sectors. The most that the provinces, whose jurisdiction over education is very clearly stated in the Canadian Constitution, can expect is to be consulted".

For her part, Chantal Hébert wrote in the March 31 edition of *La Presse*: "In the bill it tabled in the Commons to implement its February budget, the federal government opens the door to the unilateral introduction of new national standards in sectors such as postsecondary education, child care, etc.—. In fact, Bill C-76 gives the provinces a purely advisory role in this exercise.—No provision of this bill requires prior provincial consent for the introduction of national standards for social programs".

In closing, I say to my fellow Quebecers that voting Yes to Quebec sovereignty would end federal interference in Quebec's areas of jurisdiction and lead to real savings by eliminating duplication and overlap.

Voting Yes to Quebec sovereignty would allow Quebec to develop job creation, manpower training, education, health and welfare policies in line with its needs and priorities.

Voting to Quebec sovereignty would also ensure that Quebec will no longer be vulnerable to federal low blows such as the patriation of the constitution in 1982 without Quebec's consent, and the federal government's unilateral cuts to transfer payments. In short, whatever the hon. member for Brome—Missisquoi may say, Quebec says Yes to sovereignty, to maturity, to trust, to openness, and to the pride of the people we already are.

Hon. Alfonso Gagliano (Secretary of State (Parliamentary Affairs) and Deputy Leader of the Government in the House of Commons, Lib.): Madam Speaker, I am pleased to participate in this the official opposition's last opposition day before

the summer adjournment, especially since the motion put forward by the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe gives me and some of my colleagues an opportunity to dispel misconceptions voiced by our colleagues opposite on several major issues involving the Government of Canada.

• (1040)

I hope that the first group of ten Bloc members whom the Leader of the Opposition intends to send every week, starting this month, to spread the good word on the referendum are here today. They will have a better idea of what the federal government's intentions really are regarding each and every one of the bills mentioned in the motion put forward by the hon. member for Richmond—Wolfe.

Before getting on to these bills, I would like to comment on the part of the motion that reads "an entirely centralized state". It seems to me that this is going too far. I have known for a long time that the supporters of separation had a propensity for verbal inflation, but from what I can see today, they are more bombastic than ever. An entirely centralized state, they say. In fact, it is just the contrary, and the figures speak for themselves. Every study on the subject will tell you that Canada is one of the most decentralized countries in the world.

Compared to OECD countries, Canada is a federated country where the central government is the most diffused among all the public administrations. This means that, compared to the U.S., Germany, Switzerland, France or the United Kingdom, the Canadian government's share of revenues and expenditures is lower than that of the provinces and municipalities. In fact, the Government of Canada collects less than half of the overall public sector revenues.

In almost all other federated OECD countries, the central government gets more than half of these revenues. As for expenditures, in Canada, they are 3.5 times higher at the provincial and municipal level than at the federal level. How can a level of government that spends less than the other levels be described as centralizing? We must realize that decentralization has been going on for some time already in Canada.

Since the 1960s, a series of agreements have been entered into by the governments of Canada and Quebec, promoting decentralization. Successive immigration agreements have enabled Quebec to select who can immigrate to the province and to put in place its own immigration and host programs, all the while collecting substantial financial compensation from the Government of Canada.

At the international level, Quebec can deal directly with France and Belgium under Canada-Quebec framework agreements. There is also an agreement giving Quebec the status required to participate in the Francophonie Summit. In Quebec, the provincial government collects GST for the federal govern-