

Government Orders

ment has put a freeze on it so that there can be no increases at all to the Established Programs Financing.

What this amounts to is that we really do have as far as medicare is concerned an attack on standards. As this progresses in actual dollars and the cost of medicare being what it is will result in for all intents and purposes no meaningful amount of money being transferred to the provinces at which time the federal government will no longer be able to insist upon the maintenance of standards.

We are saying that the 50/50 funding ought to be restored and that the changes which have taken place ever since the program was put into effect have been devastating to the country. That applies as well, as I said, to the Canada Assistance Plan.

I would like to thank you, Mr. Speaker, for the time you have allotted me. I see my time has run out.

Mr. Greg Thompson (Carleton—Charlotte): Mr. Speaker, it is always a pleasure to take part in a debate that has to do with transfers to the provinces. I want to put a couple of things on the record.

One of them is transfers to my home province of New Brunswick. I hear this in my riding quite often when I am back home. Just about every weekend, someone will comment on transfers to the provinces. I think it is important that I put it on the record that the province of New Brunswick is getting more, not less.

I think most of us in this House understand that, including some of the members opposite. They are getting more, not less. In fact, the province of New Brunswick will get in the order of \$1.6 billion. Some calculations put it closer to \$2 billion in direct transfers from the Government of Canada to the province of New Brunswick.

That is a significant figure when you are talking about a province as small as the province of New Brunswick. Two billion dollars is a lot of money. If you want to get technical and you want to measure it on that lower number of \$1.6 billion, let us talk about that figure. Whether it is \$1.6 billion or \$2 billion, it is a fair amount of money in a province of only 720,000 people. What it comes down to at the end of the day is it amounts to 39

per cent of all the revenues coming into the province of New Brunswick.

What I am trying to paint is a picture that shows the people of Canada where the money is coming from. It is a transfer from other taxpayers in this country to a have not province, in my case the province of New Brunswick. Thirty-nine per cent of all the revenues come from other taxpayers.

To sort this out, this is the fascinating part of the whole equation. The whole equation is trying to sort this out in our own minds so that the people back home can appreciate it. When we are talking about moneys coming from Ottawa to New Brunswick, it is not money from heaven.

Somehow we fall into this idea that moneys are here in Ottawa and it is just a case of moving them out of here, putting them into those have not provinces, if you wish. It is not quite that simple. The money has to come from a taxpayer some place else. The difficulty that this government is finding itself in, and this country, is that there is no place else at the moment.

The economy of Ontario is in trouble. The economy of Alberta is a little better and the economy of B.C. is a little better as well. Those are the three major sources of tax dollars that were being transferred to those other provinces.

What we would like to do in Ottawa is increase, increase, increase, which we have done, especially to those have not provinces but our ability to increase at the rate that people would like to see it increase is limited. The money is not free. It comes from other taxpayers, and that is the point that I want to emphasize today. It comes from other taxpayers and other parts of the country.

When the member from Essex—Windsor speaks and uses some of the language that he uses, and statistics, he is quite careful in his choice of words. When he talks about the anticipated dollar amount being less than what was anticipated, he is using percentages that might have been. Might have been does not count. You have to deal with certain realities out there, especially when you are using taxpayers' money. The fact is if we are going to send more money to the provinces beyond what we tell them we are going to send them and what we have sent