

*Inquiries of the Ministry*

the minister but I do not think the matter has anything to do with court proceedings. I would therefore ask him to produce the documents, and ask that the matter be transferred for debate.

**Mr. Speaker:** Transferred for debate.

**DOMINION-PROVINCIAL RELATIONS****PROSPECTIVE FEDERAL WITHDRAWAL FROM  
JOINT SOCIAL PROGRAMS**

On the orders of the day:

**Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition):** Mr. Speaker, I should like to ask the Prime Minister a question arising out of replies given by the right hon. gentleman on Monday and yesterday concerning the intention of the government to withdraw from a number of shared cost programs and turn over additional tax points to the provinces. Is the government now giving notice to the provinces required by law to terminate the existing agreement on the hospital insurance plan?

**Right Hon. P.-E. Trudeau (Prime Minister):** No, Mr. Speaker.

**Mr. Stanfield:** I have a supplementary question with respect to the intended withdrawal of the federal government from the medicare program after five years. Does the five year period date from the entry of each province into the medicare plan, or from the date of the federal legislation coming into force?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, I understand that the five years is counted from the date when the legislation came into force.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Mr. Speaker, I have a further supplementary question. When the federal government withdraws from any of these shared cost programs and taxation points are turned over to the province, will the province, in order to continue to receive fiscal transfers, have to meet from time to time standards established and set under these programs by the government of Canada?

**Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance):** Mr. Speaker, the provinces have to have the standard established in order to get into the programs. It is our intention, I should like to make it clear to my hon. friend, to work out a formula that provides the provinces with at least half the continuing cost of the program involved. It should also be emphasized I believe, that if the provinces run the programs

[Mr. Woolliams.]

as efficiently as possible from that point onward, the formula might even give them a surplus.

**Hon. Marcel Lambert (Edmonton West):** A supplementary question to the Minister of Finance, Mr. Speaker. I will repeat a question that I asked of the Prime Minister yesterday. Does this include programs devised or proposed by the federal government and imposed upon the provinces without prior consultation, such as was the post-secondary education program?

**Mr. Benson:** Mr. Speaker, nothing was imposed upon the provinces in the post-secondary education program. We simply recognized the great priority of post-secondary education in Canada and transferred to the provinces amounts far beyond anything that was advocated even in the Bladen report.

**Mr. Stanfield:** A further supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. For the purpose of clarification, would the Minister of Finance indicate how his proposal is different from the existing arrangement, since the federal government is going to continue beyond 1972, 1973 and 1974 to meet half the costs of shared cost programs?

**Mr. Benson:** This is the fact, Mr. Speaker. It would take a long explanation, so I would refer my hon. friend to *Hansard* for December 6, 1966, at pages 10773 and 10774, where a rather full explanation was given by the then minister of finance.

**Mr. David Lewis (York South):** Mr. Speaker, the question I was going to direct to the Prime Minister now seems to me even more relevant than it was before the orders of the day were called. In view of the importance of the subject that has been discussed on orders of the day, does the Prime Minister not feel that a full statement should be made by the government on which programs are in view, and exactly how the transfer will be made, so that this house can debate a matter so basic to the welfare of Canadians?

**Mr. Trudeau:** Mr. Speaker, this basic matter, as the hon. member puts it, is at least two years old. At that time the then minister of finance made a very lengthy statement in explanation of our whole position. I suggest that the hon. member refer to it.

**Mr. Lewis:** A supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Since a statement made two years ago about a general situation and a statement about matters which are being discussed in a