

• (1610)

In conclusion, I believe that this is realistic and necessary legislation. It combines fiscal responsibility on the one hand with a real commitment by the Government to ensure high quality and high quality education for all Canadians on the other.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): Are there questions or comments? The Hon. Member for Outremont (Mrs. Pépin).

[Translation]

Mrs. Pépin: Mr. Speaker, after listening to my colleague bragging about the merits of Bill C-96 I would like to ask him how the provinces can be expected to administer health services after being deprived of millions of dollars? Can he explain to me how they will manage to make these budget cut-backs? By reducing the number of hospital beds? Or by closing down certain departments or clinics? Or emergency services? In addition, will they have to reduce services to the elderly? Or will they cut down on cancer research?

Earlier I was listening to my colleague who said that tuberculosis is on the decline, that we have fewer cases in Canada. I should simply point out to him that the number of tuberculosis cases in Canada has been increasing this past year.

Speaking of health, one of my colleagues who was a director of a major hospital in Montreal told me that, given the new AIDS cases, hospitals have limited accommodation because these cases cost a lot of money. When budgets are slashed, hospitals must limit the number of such patients.

I would like to know whether my colleague can answer these questions. Would he answer this: How does he think hospitals will be able to take in more patients and administer with that much less money—\$8 million in this case?

[English]

Mr. Nickerson: Mr. Speaker, there we have it again. The Hon. Member continues to refer to budget cuts. In fact, that is not the case. For the province of the Hon. Member, the Province of Quebec, in 1985-86 the payment will be \$4.09 billion. The following year, in 1986-87, the amount will be \$4.33 billion. That is an increase of about one-quarter of one billion dollars. I would imagine that, especially with the Liberal Government in Quebec, which the hon. lady seems to favour so much, the province will be able to use that additional one-quarter of one billion dollars for many good and useful purposes. My suspicion is that it will not be forced to cut out hospital beds. Rather, with that amount of new money it could very well bring into being even more hospital beds than are in place now, if it does not choose to divert the money to some other purpose.

With respect to the question of medical research, it should be noted that in addition to EPF transfers the federal Government spends something in the order of \$1.5 billion annually in other health-related fields. That is direct spending. Some of

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that money would go to medical research. There are also granting institutions funded by the Government that put money into that very good and valuable purpose. I think that the fears which the Hon. Member brings to the floor of the House of Commons are completely unfounded.

[Translation]

Mrs. Pépin: Mr. Speaker, my colleague mentioned the Government of Quebec, so I will refer him to the statement made by Mr. Gérard-D. Lévesque about the financial cut-backs advocated in Bill C-96. In my opinion, the Province of Quebec does not feel particularly pampered, nor is it particularly pleased with what is being proposed in Bill C-96. I think that Mr. Lévesque reacted publicly and said to the federal Government that before making such drastic cut-backs—he does not think you are doing them a favour—the federal Government might be well advised to clean up its own act, tend to its own garden as it were, and then cut down federal expenditures so as to be able to make more equitable equalization payments to the provinces. That is in response to what he said about the Government of Quebec.

This may surprise the Hon. Member, but once more, when we are speaking about education, I would really like to know how these cut-backs will be made. There are certainly departments in universities which will have to restrict the number of registrations and universities which will have to close.

As far as research is concerned, there is cancer research in the field of medicine, as well as architectural research and high technology, which is now very important in our universities. There have been major cut-backs in these areas which everyone has deplored.

Could you explain once again how the universities will apply these cut-backs in your opinion?

[English]

Mr. Nickerson: Mr. Speaker, the question is the same except with the word "education" substituted for "medical services". My reply is exactly the same with the interchange of those two concepts.

We are not cutting back expenditures; we are increasing them. I am not surprised that the provinces are saying that they would like more. One who has been part and parcel of a municipal Government knows that when the province comes along and says: "You will only receive a certain amount of assistance to fund a new sewer project", it is a natural reaction to say that more is needed. So of course the provinces are saying that they would like more. However, when they come to think about it, when they realize the financial situation of the provinces and of Canada as a whole, they must come to the realization—any sane and reasonable person would—that what the Government is doing in this Bill is the fairest and most honest for all concerned.

Mr. Kaplan: Mr. Speaker, I would like to ask a question of the Hon. Member. I listened with interest to his remarks.