

*The Address—Miss Bégin*

appointments, operations, hospitalization, drugs, ambulance service for senior citizens still be free? These are the questions that people are asking about the referendum, and this is where I believe that the PQ government has made the most effort to buy the vote of the silent majority. Whoever tries to reply to these questions or even discuss them is accused of economic terrorism. However, we must not be afraid of facing economic realities. Then, Quebecers will decide in full possession of the facts.

● (1410)

The social programs offered to the population are so numerous that I shall attempt to explain the general rule applied before going on to particulars. Generally speaking, I believe it is fair to say that if the money paid to Ottawa by Quebecers for universal programs were paid directly to Quebec, the people would probably go on benefiting from the same programs, for instance family allowances and old age security. However, the so-called selective programs, that is those aimed only at those groups who need them, such as the child tax credit, the pension supplement, certain health programs, medication, free ambulance services, and so on, could certainly not be paid in a separated Quebec without substantial tax increases or cutbacks in the programs of other departments. Why is this? Because these programs are aimed at redistribution and federal redistribution is not only from rich families to lower income families, but also from rich regions to under-privileged areas. This means that a Quebecer who receives a pension supplement or child tax credit cheque receives money from other areas in Canada and not money that he has paid in income tax.

Let us take the case of health care, to begin with. First of all, I hope that people are aware that when it comes to health expenditures, all fees paid to doctors and specialists in Quebec as well as the wages of nurses and health care workers are provided by the federal government. Unfortunately, the Canadian provinces—and it must be said that at the present time Quebec has a better record than the others in this regard—are now trying to save money at the expense of ordinary citizens by not allocating their share to health services. Indeed, we have been forced to set up an inquiry commission which is to report by June 30. But according to our analysis of public accounts, we pay 55 per cent of the Quebec health budget and the province pays 45 per cent. Ideally, it should be 50-50. It is a fact, and I challenge Mr. Lazure to deny it, that we paid \$1.5 billion for health services in Quebec in 1978-79.

This represents 27.2 per cent of the total amount paid to the provinces for health services. It means that this is equal to the percentage of the Quebec population compared to the rest of Canada. Of course, Quebecers have contributed part of that amount through taxes, but as they pay no more than 22 per cent of federal taxes, they get about \$250 million more for health services than they pay in taxes to Ottawa. As concerns

the drug insurance about which Mr. Lazure pats himself on the back, I wish to remind him that two-thirds of the recipients already got it under the Bourassa government. In fact, he just increased the number of recipients by a third with federal money.

On the other hand, the free ambulance service is a completely different matter. It will be impossible to maintain that service if Quebec were to separate, for a very simple reason. The financing does not belong and never belonged to the Quebec government, and I want to tell this to the people who are listening to us. I want to say that this ambulance service set up about a year ago at a cost of \$1.5 million is financed with the \$2.7 million the PQ government took from institutionalized senior citizens. As you will remember, we raised the pension supplement by \$20 a month for every single person or couple in January 1979. Mr. Lazure took \$15 out of those \$20, which belonged to the people and not to the Quebec government, and used that money to fund the ambulance service. I challenge him to tell the pensioners that he did not take 75 cent of our increase in the supplement. That is why I ask: where is the good government?

As far as social and welfare services are concerned, the situation is about the same as for medicare. The federal government reimburses the provinces 50 cents on each dollar they spend. That in effect means, and I do not think that people are aware of this, that each salary paid in the community health centres, each community project, the Drummondville Handicapped Bureau, the public day-care, the new home care service for the aged, and countless other services, are funded on a 50-50 basis by the federal government. The same is true where the 120,000 employees of the social affairs system are concerned.

Under that program, Quebec received 35 per cent of the funds allocated to public welfare schemes in Canada, that is \$664 million for 1978-79. While receiving 35 per cent, as I mentioned earlier, Quebecers making up 27 per cent of the population and paying only 22 per cent of federal taxes, earned a net amount of at least \$220 million. Can the Péquiste minister, Mr. Lazure, deny that? This is a question that I am putting to the people.

Let us deal now with the cheques which are not given to the government but directly to people. And I quote an article by Claude V. Marsolais in the newspaper *La Presse* who stated on April 11 that Mr. Lazure will have to convince the pensioners to vote for sovereignty-association, that is for separation, and I will quote the text:

If he has been chosen to convince, it is apparently due partly to his personal popularity with senior citizens especially older women.

I would like to tell him: Be careful Dr. Lazure. There are many "Yvettes" among elderly women. You are not the first fine speaker that they have heard. They have seen many others. Do not forget Dr. Lazure, to tell those people—elderly women—and especially those who are alone, separated,