

if we now turn to the budget, I note that for my province, Quebec, a high percentage of expenditures come under direct assistance to individuals. I note, for instance, that under the various federal government programs, an amount of \$1.35 billion is provided for equalization payments to Quebec. Now the province of Quebec can do as it wishes with these funds paid out by three provinces, British Columbia, Alberta and Ontario, to help the poorer provinces, in accordance with their needs and priorities, develop the economic sector they wish, their industry, for instance; but the provinces could also distribute the money among their residents if they wished. Under these equalization payments, Quebec gets 52 per cent of the total amount paid out by these three provinces. I do think we ought to mention it, especially in the context of a constitutional debate. I note that amount, Mr. Speaker, and the source of information is the C.D. Howe Research Institute as published in the periodical *Accent Québec*. It is a research and publication program set up by the C.D. Howe Research Institute of Montreal. We note here that the steering committee is chaired by Mr. Michel Bélanger, president of the Provincial Bank of Canada, and includes members of some New Brunswick universities, business leaders such as Alcan officials, but I will not list all the members of that board of directors. Research has been performed by the C.D. Howe Research Institute which has already published about ten booklets on taxes, expenditures in Quebec and in Ontario, a comparison of taxes and expenditures in those two central provinces. I refer to page one. It is pertinent and I think it should be stated, because I have never seen that excerpt in any newspaper. I quote: The central government has also paid a substantial amount of equalization payments to Quebec. The combination of its own revenue with equalization payments provides Quebec with a total per capita income higher than in Ontario. However, the level of per capita expenditures is higher in Quebec than in Ontario. Thus, in spite of the fact that Quebec is financially poorer than Ontario, it spends more per capita.

The following question should be asked: Does that higher level of expenditures indicate superior services, a greater need of public services or a less effective distribution of those services? The public also questions not only the Quebec government but all other governments about budgets and productivity standards within various departments.

Regarding these transfer payments to the provinces I was saying that one can wonder if cutbacks could have been made? And there again, Mr. Speaker, when Quebec expansion minister Landry criticized the federal government for having made these cutbacks, he said they would result in a loss of jobs for his province.

I have no intention of dwelling on that issue but I would like to deal with it in a more constructive manner than the member for Rimouski (Mr. Allard). He seemed to attack the Canadian government for its advertising budget designed to publicize the economic incentives offered by the Department of Regional

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Economic Expansion, which aims at informing Canadians on the purchasing capacity of the Department of Supply and Services. Yet what he does not tell us, for instance, is their support for the Parti Québécois which is revealed by the fact that the government of Quebec spends \$24 million in advertising, a subject which I do not intend to deal with now and which has also already been raised by the Union Nationale party. We are dealing here with an amount almost similar to the one spent by the Canadian government for the country as a whole. So I am wondering who spent or invested greater and more generous amounts of money than we did. Are we really dealing at this stage with a waste of public funds? I put the question to the hon. member for Rimouski.

I now want to deal with the criticisms made by the NDP member who was calling for more severe review of the financial operations of Crown corporations. I must say that to a certain extent I share his opinion on the subject. This is why I have already introduced a private bill concerning the activities of CBC so that the appropriate committee might study its annual report as soon as it is tabled in order for us to have ample time to ask questions from this corporation. Mr. Speaker, I would also like to mention other important activities, namely the decision made by the Canadian government regarding the development of the aeronautical sector.

• (1750)

[English]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired.

Mr. Peters: It being six o'clock, may I call it six o'clock?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): It being six o'clock, I do now leave the chair until eight o'clock p.m.

At 6 p.m. the House took recess.

• (2000)

AFTER RECESS

The House resumed at 8 p.m.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Turner): Order, please. At six o'clock the hon. member for Timiskaming (Mr. Peters) had the floor, and he has 20 minutes remaining.

Mr. Arnold Peters (Timiskaming): Mr. Speaker, looking at the official opposition benches, one wonders whether a message has already been received.

The Conservative motion today deals with a problem which I am sure all Canadians know we have. It has been aggravated partly by the fact that the Liberal government has been here, in my opinion, much too long. There is always a tendency for