

Oral Questions

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the principle does not apply to medicare. We never said it does apply to medicare. It is only that Member who is saying that it does.

Mr. Broadbent: Pensions were sacrosanct once too.

An Hon. Member: Here today, gone tomorrow.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): Let me give a couple of figures. This year we are spending as a Government \$2.2 billion more on social programs, \$865 million more on Old Age Security.

Let me point out to the Hon. Member that it is 4.3 per cent of recipients of Old Age Security who are affected by this—

Mr. Riis: One hundred thirty thousand in other words.

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): —and less than 2 per cent have the whole amount recovered. We are maintaining the universal character of the program but we are also doing it in a sensible way, so that we can maintain these programs on an ongoing basis.

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[Translation]

HEALTH

LACK OF FUNDS—GOVERNMENT POSITION

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, this is a very bad Budget. But the most shameful aspect of the Budget has to do with health care, and I quote from page 13 of the *Budget Papers*:

The change in the growth of Established Programs Financing transfers will result in federal expenditure reduction of \$200 million in 1990-91 with increasing savings in future years.

—on the back of sick Canadians. It's revolting!

Last February 7 all the Health Ministers got together and stated it was urgent to restore adequate funding under this program because our health care system was falling apart. How can the Minister of National Health and Welfare explain to the Canadian people that in order to reduce his deficit he must tax the sick and provide fewer health services than are now available because he has no money left?

[English]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, what the Hon. Member has said is wrong. It is quite wrong. We are increasing the amount of payments

to the provinces under the Established Programs Financing by \$25 billion. It is very clear, right there in the documents, and he knows that it is there in the documents. It is a \$25 billion increase. That is a very substantial amount. We are providing this to allow the provinces to continue to provide the medicare services which they have been providing.

Mr. Tobin: Same level of service?

Mr. Wilson (Etobicoke Centre): This is the same services that the provinces are requiring and have been providing for many years now. I draw his attention again to the fact that there is an increase in debt service costs this year of \$6 billion. Surely the Hon. Member can see that if we do not get this under control this will be dangerous to the whole nature of government in this country. What we are trying to do with this Budget is reverse that process, get that amount of money down so that we can continue to provide the services and programs that Canadians value.

[Translation]

INQUIRY AS TO WHY CERTAIN TAXES NOT INCREASED

Mr. Jean-Claude Malépart (Laurier—Sainte-Marie): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance should stop hanging around Bay Street and go see what's happening in hospital corridors, where patients have to wait in line for care.

Go to Québec where patients have to wait a whole year before having a heart operation. Personally I had to fight to get the cancer treatment without which I would not have survived.

The Minister of Finance should leave Bay Street and go—

Can the Minister explain why he chose not to impose heavier taxes on individuals—on corporations and banks instead of finding \$200 million to provide health care for sick Canadians?

[English]

Hon. Michael Wilson (Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, let me refer the Hon. Member to a comment that his Leader has made:

"The mounting federal debt is obviously a burden that this Government and Parliament will have to deal with", John Turner said yesterday.

That is February 23, 1984.