

*Government Orders*

With regard to the social transfers, the question has been raised as to whether they should be going into one pool. If the Bloc has a problem with grouping them together, knowing full well that the provinces spend the funds wherever they want anyway, would the member agree to mandating that all dollars transferred for health care be spent on health care, that all dollars transferred for education be spent on education, that all dollars transferred for social programs be spent on social programs, and that the provinces would have absolutely no discretion in that spending?

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Sauvageau:** Mr. Speaker, I thank the hon. member for his question. I find that, when it comes to streamlining this whole transfer process, Quebec probably has the ideal solution: we pay our taxes to the province and we make our laws in the province. This is what we call sovereignty. This is what we want to do, so as to avoid all these problems.

The reason why we oppose these national standards and these costs is very simple. As I said earlier, the number one recommendation of the committee on national standards for education provides for basic national standards on all subjects taught and on all training programs. The federal government also says in the report that it wants to see more science and technology courses. Sure, but if, for example, Newfoundland would rather offer more courses related to fisheries or social issues, what will happen if national standards are in place? That is my first example.

Let me give you another. Do we really want to allocate the money earmarked for education to education, and the budgets for health care to health care?

• (1605)

I am personally convinced that the Canadian provinces as a whole are responsible and that they will allocate the funds where it is necessary.

**Mr. René Canuel (Matapédia—Matane, BQ):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Terrebonne, who wants certain powers. It is said that all the English provinces are getting together to demand more autonomy, that they are also in favour of decentralized government. Mr. Johnson says he keeps hearing the same message when he travels across Canada. And Mr. Bourassa said the same thing.

Everyone wants more power. No one is satisfied, and especially not Quebec. Why do we go on making these demands year after year? Why do we keep saying we must do something that is very worthwhile and make Quebec sovereign?

My colleague talked about education, and we realize that Quebec is lagging behind, because they wanted to create a lag in research and development. In the Gaspé alone, 10,000 students have left the region. I want to ask the hon. member: Why is Quebec not, and never will be—in my estimation—satisfied with the situation in post-secondary education?

**Mr. Sauvageau:** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for Matapédia—Matane for asking me this question.

Education is my specialty, and although I do not think I have the answer, I may have part of the answer.

First of all, as he said earlier, at the post-secondary level students, like workers who have trouble finding a job, have to cope with overlapping programs and duplication, whether we are talking about federal or provincial programs.

I believe that as members of the Bloc Québécois, we are more interested in education, which is a provincial jurisdiction, than members on the other side of the House, and I know why. They have other things on their minds, so let the government render unto the provinces what belongs to the provinces, like education, so they can get on with other business.

Now I would like to explain why young people are against national standards for education. As my colleague said, in Matapédia—Matane, for instance, they might need special emphasis on a particular sector, and that is what the *états généraux de l'éducation au Québec* are bound to conclude.

But how can we have national standards in an area that, when the Fathers of Confederation signed their agreement, was a provincial responsibility? Or so we are told. But how can we have similar standards for health care in Quebec, Ontario and Newfoundland? The federal government has imposed national standards for health care. What Bill C-76 wants to impose is the same medicine—no pun intended—this time for education. They want to set national standards for education.

When? Just when the government is going to cut funding. In other words, it gives less money to a province, gives more orders, and the province has to fall in line, otherwise funding for all programs will be cut: social assistance, education and health care. That is why we object.

[*English*]

**Mr. Jim Peterson (Willowdale, Lib.):** Mr. Speaker, approximately a year ago Canada began an incredible transformation, a change that has had a profound impact on all of us in this Chamber and on Canadians everywhere.

I am talking about finally coming to grips with our national debt, which over the years has now reached the unconscionable level of \$550 billion and which demands so much of our interest that one-third of all of the tax revenue paid by Canadians to the federal government goes just to pay the interest. One-quarter of all federal government expenditures today are simply to pay the interest on our debt, let alone not paying it down at all. We have had to come to grips with that, and ever increasing annual debt adding to it. It has not been easy.

In the past governments have always been in the mode of giving things to people, of increasing programs, of increasing expenditures. Maybe it does not come easily to a lot of us to start to look at the reality and come to grips with our debt and deficit crisis. We have done it. One of the amazing things that we on the finance committee learned as we travelled across the country is that Canadians, from the richest to the poorest, all said we must get the deficit and debt under control. There was a lot of legitimate debate on how to go about it, but as we opened up the