

I have also asked questions, as did the former Member for Central Nova, which were fogged off with the reply that the Government was examining the problem or trying to work out a dual nationality agreement with the Czechoslovak authorities. I hope that any such agreement will contain provisions which will safeguard these Canadians. I would go further and suggest that Canada could take the lead in elaborating and developing an international convention on dual nationalities under UN auspices.

The problem is that it not only causes schizophrenia in honest to goodness immigrants who came to this country in good faith, but could very well facilitate the planting of a number of espionage agents working on behalf of the Soviet Union or the Czechoslovak government. That is a problem we must examine very carefully. I hope the Parliamentary Secretary to the Secretary of State for External Affairs (Mrs. Beauchamp-Niquet) will shed some light on this very serious problem.

[Translation]

Mrs. Suzanne Beauchamp-Niquet (Parliamentary Secretary to Deputy Prime Minister and Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I should like to point out that Canadians of Czechoslovak origin, like those of other East European origins, do sometimes experience difficulties with respect to their original nationality, particularly when they travel in their country of birth. Canada offers consular assistance to those Canadians so that in the other country they will be given fair treatment pursuant to the Final Act of Helsinki and the Closing Document of Madrid concerning the free movement of people.

In Czechoslovakia, a particular difficulty stems from a directive under which a Canadian of Czechoslovak origin has a choice: either he reaffirms his Czechoslovak nationality and travels with a Czech passport or, after paying a fee, answering a highly detailed questionnaire and waiting for a certain period of time, he renounces his Czechoslovak nationality and travels in Czechoslovakia with a Canadian passport and a Czech visa.

Now and again, the Department of External Affairs and our embassy in Prague make representations to Czechoslovak authorities concerning the difficulties experienced by Czech Canadians who have a dual nationality. In addition, External Affairs officials are in contact with representatives of the Canado-Czechoslovak community about this question.

Precisely to solve once and for all the problems of a consular nature, including those of dual nationality which concern my colleague opposite and the Government, a few years ago Canada began to negotiate consular agreements with East European countries. Negotiations are long and complex, all the more so because the provinces must be consulted about certain aspects. Nevertheless, a lot of progress has been made and we hope soon to be able to sign such agreements with some of them, including Hungary and the USSR.

Mr. Munro (Esquimalt-Saanich): And Czechoslovakia!

Adjournment Debate

Mrs. Beauchamp-Niquet: I am coming to that, Mr. Speaker. As for Czechoslovakia, negotiations have been very slow since 1980 because of the problem caused by the aforementioned guideline. Last September, while in Prague for the purpose of discussing consular relations, External Affairs officials were informed that changes in the Czechoslovakian legislation were being considered and that, meanwhile, present regulations would be applied more simply and quickly. In view of the circumstances, the Canadian Government hopes that negotiations will resume in the near future. I would like to add, Mr. Speaker, that we understand the concerns of the Hon. Member. It is a concern shared by this Government which explains our negotiating position for the purposes of signing a memorandum of agreement.

● (1815)

[English]

ESTABLISHED PROGRAMS FINANCING—ANNOUNCEMENT IN THRONE SPEECH—AMOUNT OF FEDERAL FUNDING. (B)
GOVERNMENT POLICY ON FUNDING MEDICAL CARE

Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill): Mr. Speaker, I would like to follow up on a question I asked the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) last week having to do with the \$500 million which was indicated in the Throne Speech and which has been described by the Government as additional funding in the transfer payments to the provinces for health care and post-secondary education, and to take issue with the description the Government has given to this money as being additional money.

This is money which the Government would have had to provide in any case. This money comes about as a result of the formula in the Established Programs Financing and the formula is tied to the Gross National Product. Earlier this year, perhaps last year or whenever it was that the Government estimated it would be transferring \$13 billion to the provinces, it estimated that on the basis of what the Government thought the GNP would be at that time. The Government underestimated the growth of the GNP. I think everybody did. The money which the Government estimated it would transfer is less than what the Government will in fact transfer in 1983-84, by some \$500 million, according to the Government's own figures. This is not new money. This is not discretionary money. It is not money the Government is putting in over and above its existing commitments. It just means that at one point in time the Government had an incorrect view of what its existing commitments were. Now the Government has a more correct view of what its existing commitments require the Government to give to the provinces in 1983-84.

● (1820)

The federal Government has done a great disservice with the introduction of the Canada Health Act to the political context within which we now have to talk about federal-provincial funding and the federal-provincial partnership which medicare represents. It tried to give the impression that somehow it was being generous when it comes to health care and post-second-