

*The Budget—Mr. Asselin*

provinces are not even sure of getting licences?

**Mr. Pelletier:** That is precisely what I was asking the hon. member, Mr. Speaker.

There has never been any question of granting licences to private companies for educational television and the hon. member certainly did not get his information from any statement I ever made in the house or outside.

**Mr. Asselin:** I am very happy, Mr. Speaker, to have the confirmation of the minister on that point. But could the minister assure the house that if a province asks a licence for operating educational television, the federal government would agree to grant it? Can the minister answer?

**Mr. Pelletier:** Mr. Speaker, there is no question about my having to answer. Evidently, the member speaks of a statement made in this house and which he has not read because it is said in that statement that licences will be granted to a federal and public agency, and to it only. Therefore I wonder why he puts that question and has been referring for the last fifteen minutes to a statement about which he obviously knows very little since the answers to questions he puts are included in this statement, made more than a week ago.

**Some hon. Members:** Hear, hear.

**Mr. Asselin:** Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to note the minister's statement as this confirms what he said in the house, namely that he would grant TV licences to companies and agencies. He just said it in this house. Therefore, the minister should consider giving the same opportunity to the provinces if they want to get a licence to operate in the field of educational TV.

Mr. Speaker, this of course is not the last time we see the government opposite encroaching on provincial matters. It did so in the field of medicare, and the Quebec taxpayers will probably pay a penalty for not participating in the federal plan, as they have to pay taxes to finance medicare on the same basis as the people in other provinces who join to this plan. When we have—

[Mr. Asselin.]

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Order. I regret to interrupt the hon. member, but his time has expired. Does the house agree unanimously to allow the hon. member to proceed with his remarks?

**Some hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Asselin:** Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank the hon. members and I think that the minister is even more magnanimous than those back-benchers who said that I should speak for a few minutes only. However, I shall not take too much of the time of the house to conclude my remarks.

The Quebec taxpayers, because they do not contribute to the federal government medicare program any more than those of some other provinces at present will have to pay taxes to help its cost. I do not suggest that this program is a bad thing, but the federal government, before putting it into force, should first have consulted the provinces so as to establish a plan meeting the conditions laid down by the provinces.

[English]

**Mr. Benson:** We had consulted the provinces.

[Translation]

**Mr. Asselin:** The minister says: We had consulted the provinces. However, some provinces said that they refused to accept the federal program, because they could not meet the four conditions imposed on them by the federal government.

I say that the present government wanted to act unilaterally and that the taxpayers of Quebec and other provinces, who do not now participate in the federal medicare plan will be penalized by taxes they will have to pay to the federal government. In fact, the 2 per cent tax might help the federal government to meet the expenditures of the medicare plan.

• (9:30 p.m.)

We would have preferred, Mr. Speaker, that in his budget speech the minister deal with some positive solutions and tell us about his plans for overcoming our unemployment problems. This is a problem not to be neglected as it is known that in the Atlantic provinces the unemployment percentage is