

*Adjournment Debate*

The computerization of carload centres has improved the reliability and accessibility of information to customers. It is, of course, and I share the sentiment which the Hon. Member stated, regrettable that jobs are being lost, although in this case a very small number are involved. It should be stressed, however, that those positions involving direct contact with customers—the sales representatives—and the assistant superintendent will remain, as at present, at Charlottetown.

I would also like to remind the Hon. Member that CN has a full range of employee-assistance programs designed to minimize the adverse effects of such changes. As usual, pre-retirement, retraining and other provisions are available to these employees.

● (1810)

HEALTH—CANADIAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATION TASK FORCE—  
REQUEST THAT GOVERNMENT CO-OPERATE. (B) FUNDING FOR  
HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

**Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West):** Mr. Speaker, my participation in this adjournment debate relates to a question I asked the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) several days ago, as to whether or not the federal Government would co-operate with the Canadian Medical Association in the conduct of the task force which is dealing with the allocation of health care resources. The Prime Minister responded negatively. That led to my request to have a little more discussion about the issue this evening. My supplementary question was whether the federal Government, and the Prime Minister, specifically, would be discussing the issue of health care funding with the Premiers at the First Ministers' Conference. Again the answer was, no. There was certainly a lack of clarity in the answer to the second half of my question.

The issue of health care is an important one to the Opposition, and I am sure it is important to Government backbenchers. But I believe it is most important, Mr. Speaker, to Canadians in all walks of life and in all parts of the country. One of the reasons for the development of the medicare system historically is that it would break down access barriers to good health care. With the Government sort of dithering around and cutting revenue to Provinces, we have a developing crisis in the country in the sense that Canadians are being denied access to health care because they must go on waiting lists. If I needed heart surgery of some kind, Mr. Speaker, and I had to wait six months to get it because there were no hospital beds or doctors available, the odds on me dying prior to treatment would go up with every passing day. That situation is occurring in Canada today.

The Minister recently wrote a letter, asking that it be printed in the *Canadian Medical Journal*. In her letter she acknowledged freely that the Canada health Act will be controversial. She indicated that most major initiatives are controversial. I say to the Members opposite, Mr. Speaker, that controversy seems to be the order of the day. If you look back over the last 15 years of federal Government activity, you will see an accelerated sense of controversy. I ask myself whether many problems in the human sphere are really solved

through controversy. They are resolved, but are they really solved?

I asked myself if there is not another model available rather than controversy, whether we might be better advised to more often use co-operation. I look at the issue of health care and I see 24 million Canadians who are potential users of the health care system. I look at two levels of Government, provincial and federal, which are both involved in the funding, although constitutionally it is clear that the delivery of health care is a provincial responsibility, and I am reminded of all the meetings I have held since I took on this responsibility on behalf of the Conservative Party with professional groups, physiotherapists, nurses, medical doctors and union groups, all concerned about the health care system. After a series of meetings like that, Mr. Speaker, one has to be convinced that the problem will not be resolved unless people of goodwill and knowledge sit down, co-operating together in a problem-solving modality.

The present Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) has told us on more than one occasion that one of the groups she is consulting with is the Provinces. I put a question on the Order Paper asking for specifics of when and where that consultation took place. The answer I received back was very polite, but if you cut through the politeness it really said, "It's none of your darn business." I was elected by the people of the Calgary West riding, and I have assumed the responsibility on behalf of the Conservative Caucus of the Official Opposition to deal with health care matters in this country. I asked a simple question of the Minister of National Health and Welfare, namely, which provincial Ministers did she meet with, and I received the answer that it is none of my business. The Canadian public apparently has no right to know when and where the Minister of National Health and Welfare is meeting with provincial officials.

● (1815)

I rose in the House and put to the Prime Minister that the Canadian Medical Association had put a task force in place to look at the allocation of health care resources because it felt the health care of Canadians was at risk. I asked if the Government and its officials would co-operate with that task force? The Prime Minister stood in the House and said no. I posed to the Prime Minister the issue of the lack of funding in the health care system, and asked whether he would consult with provincial Premiers on methods of providing more money for that system. The Prime Minister said, no. Whatever other anxiety there is among the 1.6 million unemployed, Mr. Speaker, there is an increasing incidence of stress-related illness at a time when our medical care system is in danger of falling apart because of a lack of funding and co-operation.

I simply say to the Government, quit confronting, be open, let us know what is going on, invite people to co-operate with you in problem solving, and the health care of Canadians will be better because of it.

**Mr. Jim Schroder (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Mr. Speaker, my recollection of the Prime Minister's (Mr. Trudeau) answer to the Hon.