

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

optometry in the plan, yet the federal government still says it is not going to share in this cost.

This is a repetition of what was done to the provinces under the hospitalization scheme in respect of mental health services and tuberculosis. The provinces were left in the position where they had to carry their own costs despite the fact that we were being given a piece of legislation that was supposed to be all inclusive. I submit this is quite unfair, and a clear case of the government breaking its commitment when it does not now include these other services which provinces like British Columbia, Manitoba and Saskatchewan are requesting, not to mention New Brunswick and perhaps one or two others.

In light of the commitment made by the former Minister of National Health and Welfare, and in the light of what is stated in the act, I call upon the government not to take the negative position it is now taking. The Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) said the other day that he would put the emphasis on getting all of the provinces in. Mr. Speaker, you do not get all the provinces in by not keeping the word of the government, and I call for that word to be kept.

Mr. Robert Stanbury (Parliamentary Secretary to Secretary of State): Mr. Speaker, the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Munro) advises me that the possibility of including the services of other health professionals, including optometrists, under the Medical Care Act has been discussed at various federal-provincial conferences of ministers of health. The view of the federal government is that we should not yet consider extending benefits when all provinces have not yet made clear their intentions regarding participation in the medical care plan.

This is not in any way a breach of commitment. Our present efforts are directed toward obtaining for all Canadians the benefits of the Medical Care Act. The difficulty with determining the extent of provincial requests for the inclusion of optometry lies in the fact that some provinces which might unofficially support its inclusion officially oppose in one form or another the Medical Care Act itself. However, some of the provinces certainly have indicated interest in the inclusion of optometry under the plan. It would seem likely that this inclusion might be expected to be speedily accomplished once all provinces have indicated their intentions with regard to the basic package under the Medical Care Act, which was passed almost unanimously with support from all parties in this house.

[Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre).]

**TRANSPORT—DISCRIMINATORY REDUCTIONS
IN EXPRESS ASSOCIATION RATES**

Mr. John Burton (Regina East): Mr. Speaker, on Wednesday, February 12 I addressed the following question to the Minister of Transport (Mr. Hellyer):

Will the minister undertake to investigate recent rate reductions by the Express Transport Association in western Canada which appear to discriminate against Regina and Saskatoon.

Tonight I am disappointed that I do not see in the house either the Minister of Transport, the Minister without Portfolio with special responsibilities in the field of transport, or the Minister without Portfolio, the hon. member for Saskatoon-Humboldt (Mr. Lang) who has a special interest in this subject. I presume that the parliamentary secretary to the President of the Privy Council (Mr. Forest) will answer the question and probably slough off any responsibility for this particular matter.

The Express Transport Association is an independent body acting on behalf of Algoma Centre Railway, Northern Alberta Railway, Ontario Northland Railway, Railway Express Agency Incorporated, Canadian National Railways and Canadian Pacific Railway. In December, the Express Transport Association and its member companies introduced freight rate reductions on bulk and individual shipments from Toronto and Montreal to western Canadian cities including Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton and Vancouver, but not including Regina and Saskatoon. The rate reductions which were introduced amounted to from 13 per cent to 28 per cent depending on the type of shipment. For example, to quote some of the effects of these new rates, a 200 pound shipment from Montreal to Swift Current can be shipped to Winnipeg and then re-shipped to its destination for \$13.45. However, if the same order were to be shipped to Regina and then shipped to Swift Current the cost would be \$16.82, a difference of 25 per cent which is incomprehensible and can only be classified as discrimination against Regina and Saskatoon, as distribution points in western Canada.

In addition, it might also be noted that the same 200 pound article can be shipped to Alberta cities, that is Calgary and Edmonton, for \$11, which is \$2.90 or 25 per cent less than it would cost to ship the same goods to Regina alone. I can only conclude that this is discrimination not only against Regina and Saskatoon, but against the Province of Saskatchewan.