

Supply

The apology that the member would have us all consider includes the fact that poor Ontario no longer has any cash, so it cannot deal with medicare in the way that it would have wanted to deal with medicare. That does not prevent members of the NDP from pointing fingers and saying: "Look at those nasty Liberal provincial premiers. They are actually talking about considering ways to take a look at medicare. They are looking at perhaps restructuring the way that we deal with the finances of medicare".

Meanwhile Ontario, my province, much to my chagrin, although it is not my government, has already given an indication of what it will do. In fact, the premier of Ontario lets his actions do his talking and not his accusations. He will be judged by what he has done. Remember what we are talking about is the principle of universality and accessibility to a medicare program.

Even a few government members have taken the trouble to point out that it has been Liberal federal governments that have established the building blocks of medicare and hospital programs throughout this country. Even they acknowledge that we are on the side of what is right because history speaks with its facts on behalf of what we have done. We will be judged by our record.

Here is the NDP record. I am only going to read part of it here, largely because I cannot see all of this writing without my glasses. In the central region in this last budget, can you believe because we are talking about universality and accessibility, you have got to have a facility to go to. You have got to have health professionals for any assistance that you need. But where are they? You can maintain the principle of universality and accessibility to everybody, but if you close the door on them, and you do not provide the service, what good is that rhetoric?

In the central region, York County hospital will lay off 90 employees and close 90 acute care beds. In metropolitan Toronto the NDP Government of Ontario, the premier of the NDP, host of defenders of what is right at Mount Sinai Hospital, in an attempt to save \$3.6 million will lay off 59 full-time and 31 part-time employees on April 1. What a surprise, including 51 registered nursing assistants and laboratory workers.

• (1600)

In the Hamilton-Niagara region, Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital plans to lay off 80 full-time and part-time employees. In addition to staff reductions, the hospital will close a 34-bed acute care unit, cut another by 12 beds and cut financing for its community health service centre.

If this is what the NDP government of Ontario wants to put forward as its indication, its hallmark, its standard of what constitutes universal health care and medicare, what it considers is standard for the principle of universal access to medicare throughout the country, then I would hope that the mover of this motion would have the courage to stand up and say, "Yes, we will be judged by our actions while we wag our tongue at those nasty Liberal premiers who are actually considering what might happen".

And for what? Because the member for Oshawa says we must take a look at all the ways to save money. We have to look at this because we do not have any extra cash.

Is this in fact true? I indicated earlier in a question that the province of Ontario, when the NDP government took control, was in a surplus situation, no deficit.

An hon. member: Oh, come one.

Mr. Volpe: It seems we have discovered that when truth speaks even stones hear.

We went from a surplus situation to that first budget by an NDP government when there was an increase to a deficit situation of some \$9 billion.

I was pretty good in math but I still cannot count that far. In one year the government, the NDP Government of Ontario, went out and gathered up, through debts, another \$9 billion to do what?

Mrs. Gaffney: It's all those Amex cards they carry around.

Mr. Volpe: Of course it must be some of those credit cards. You are right.

If the principle of universality was not the main theme, if the medical health program was not the main theme, if the hospital system in Ontario was not the main theme, or the encouragement of all health care professionals to stay in the province of Ontario, then for what did they raise this money?