

the last election is that money was cut back in transfer payments to British Columbia, a Sacred government.

It makes no difference the colour of the political stripe of the government in the respective province. If the money is not there it cannot be spent. The question is whether or not we collectively as a nation hold up as an important value and condition of citizenship the provision of quality accessible medical care in this country. That is what matters.

This important debate is something that ought to unite the country at a time when it is fractured. It is something that ought to pull us together at a time when a great deal pulls us apart. It is something that ought to appeal to those things we believe in rather than appeal to those things we oppose. Trying to turn this one little bit of crazy glue, if I can put it that way, that still keeps this country together into something for partisan advantage is a tragic mistake.

If the New Democrats retain one iota of that traditional sense of being able to rise above it all, to put aside the game of power, the outs being out and the ins being in and the outs trying to get back in, and to speak of values once again, if they can find even a last smidgen, a residue of that conviction in their now tortured political partisan souls, they will stand and apologize for this motion. They will withdraw this motion. They will say that they understand, as I do, that medicare is too important in the context of the current debate about unity in this country to be so tainted, to be so stained, to be so warped, to be so twisted, to be so used in the worst partisan way. They will withdraw this motion. They will apologize. They will cease and desist from these cheap partisan attacks.

I know that there is some discomfort for New Democrats in seeing their party go down in the polls consistently for the last number of months while the Liberal Party has gone up in the polls consistently for the last couple of months. But I want to tell my colleagues something. They should no more be alarmed at their consistently going down in the polls than I am taking any great joy in the fact that the Liberal Party has consistent-

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ly gone up. The only election that counts is the one when the public decides at the next general election who is to occupy the seats in this place. It is wrong, short-sighted, unprincipled and unhelpful to have their actions, to have their so-called beliefs or to have their values jettisoned or dictated as a result of the latest opinion polls.

I say to my colleagues who sit to the left with whom I do not always agree: "Please put aside such transparent partisanship, such self-serving rhetoric, such nonsensical motions". I say to them: "Please find a residue of your heretofore souls, come to your senses and once again make a contribution, as little as it is, to serving Canada rather than contributing to its destruction".

Mr. Dan Heap (Trinity—Spadina): Madam Speaker, the hon. member has put on his usual Wayne Gretzky performance of rhetoric and insult, but it is clear that his main object was to take people's attention away from the embarrassment—perhaps he feels an embarrassment or perhaps he does not; I will give him a chance to say so—of the fact that his premier stated an intention to change one of the fundamental principles of the health care system we have.

Mr. Tobin: Where is the quote?

Mr. Heap: He is putting forward the suggestion that we should consider user fees. User fees would be a fundamental attack on the universality and the public funding which are principles of the medicare system.

Instead of addressing that issue the hon. member has chosen to attack some of the NDP provinces for having announced cutbacks in the programs of certain hospitals and other medical facilities. I guess he is predicting that the third NDP province will in its budget.

Nobody is proud of lay-offs. No party, certainly in this House, advocates lay-offs for the sake of lay-offs. Whether it be the NDP governments of this country, the Liberal governments in the provinces of this country or Conservative led provinces of this country, the lay-offs in the health system are certainly a matter of regret. They are not in themselves an attack on the medicare system, nor are they an attack on the principle of universality. If there is less money, there is less money.