

*Government Orders*

As crucial as these deficit reduction measures were to the 1995 budget, Canadians also expected something more. They wanted to be reassured that savings would not be achieved through deep cuts in Canada's cherished social programs, particularly medicare.

Indeed, one vital component of the budget provides for improved delivery of health care and enhanced research on biotechnology as well as retaining funds necessary to ensure improvements in the Canada assistance plan and to student financial assistance.

The introduction of so-called block funding in the form of the new Canada social transfer will enable the provinces to exercise greater control over how moneys are allocated, thereby allowing them the flexibility to fund programs according to local demands for services. The delivery of social programs is the constitutional responsibility of provinces and that they will have. It is also the claim of provinces that they should have this flexibility and that they will have.

This approach will bring health care closer to communities. At the same time, the system allows the federal government to continue to uphold the five principles of medicare enshrined in the Canada Health Act: universality, accessibility, comprehensiveness, portability and public administration. The Minister of Finance said that flexibility does not mean a free-for-all.

These principles of medicare are not subject to federal-provincial negotiation. They are not negotiable, as the two levels of government implement the agreement on the Canada social transfer. Rather they are fundamental pillars of Canadian society. They are the foundation on which our health care system is constructed.

• (1310)

The government has vowed in no uncertain terms that the Canada social transfer "will not sacrifice the quality of service available to Canadians". We must remember that it is possible not only to maintain our current delivery of health care at the current level of funding but to effect improvements. In other words, we can do more with as much.

Key to this strategy is the practice of substituting equally effective lower cost treatment approaches for traditional ones. For example, we can make increased use of out-patient care, encouraging patients to see family physicians before consulting specialists and allowing non-medical health care professionals to substitute for medical doctors in defined areas of care.

The same flexibility within the new social transfer which can lead to improved health care also bodes well for the future of the Canada assistance plan or CAP. The incorporation of the CAP into the Canada social transfer provides the provinces with the freedom and flexibility they require to deliver social programs

most efficiently and effectively. Again, the goal is to do more without increasing actual government expenditures. This is an attainable goal.

I mentioned earlier that the government has shown determination to ensure a sound future for youth. This determination is exemplified by the deficit cutting initiatives that relieve our children and youth of some of the burden of the national debt but it is found in other areas in the budget as well.

The federal contribution to university and college funding will be rolled into the Canada social transfer, again guaranteeing the provinces the freedom to distribute funds according to need and using the savings achieved through avoidance of duplication.

The government's continuing commitment to fund granting councils which support the direct costs of university research and which support the Canada student loans program as well as post-secondary education for Indian and Inuit students all attest to the government's commitment to our youth.

There is much in the budget to guarantee Canada both a prosperous present and an even more prosperous future. Part and parcel of that prosperity will be the maintenance of the social programs which have served Canadians well in the past by keeping our nation competitive and our citizens protected from social catastrophe. Under this tough, yet sensitive budget, Canadians can be assured that programs will become even more responsive to their needs in the future.

The government faces a daunting task as it leaves the 20th century and enters the 21st century. If government had simply slashed spending without due regard for the underprivileged among us, it would have turned its back on principle. If it had continued to spend without due regard for the future of the nation and the future generations it would have turned its back on reality.

Instead, as has been the case so many times since it took office, the government has taken the middle ground approach and avoided extremist solutions suggested by the two parties opposite. This balance is what ultimately will enable it to succeed where other governments have failed.

**Mr. Jim Gouk (Kootenay West—Revelstoke, Ref.):** Mr. Speaker, I am going to limit my remarks on the budget today to transport, which is appropriate since I am the transport critic for the Reform Party and the Reform Party being, of course, the national opposition party.

Generally transport is an area that has great potential in reducing government costs and the devolution of government services to the private sector. In this area transport is generally moving in a direction that I agree with. One item that is being changed that I particularly agree with is the privatization of air