

*Government Orders*

Of necessity any sanction imposed under Bill C-20 would exceed the federal government's cash contribution to the province's health insurance program.

In order to relieve itself of the obligation to maintain the national standard established by the Canada Health Act, therefore a province would have to withdraw from every federal-provincial fiscal arrangement involving the transfer of funds from the federal government to the province, an impossible and unrealistic task and practice.

In the view of this law firm the effect of Bill C-20 is to alter the character of a sanction under the Canada Health Act from the withdrawal of a privilege, i.e. access to federal funds to supplement the provincial health care budget to the imposition of fines, i.e. the refusal to transfer federal funds designated for programs other than health care and to which the province is otherwise entitled.

The implication here is that in order to get what they want done and to avoid putting in more cash, to avoid the issues of tax reform, of properly funding Canada's social programs, the cabinet is going to look around to see who is vulnerable, who does not have a political constituency. Is it the poor receiving money on welfare through CAP? Is it the students who need loans? Is it the faculty who need new libraries and proper facilities? Who is vulnerable? Is it the city of Ottawa? Is it the city of Winnipeg? Is it the core area initiative? What is it? What is vulnerable?

Let us show the provinces that we are boss and let us take money from these because we know the provinces will not risk health care to protect these little programs. When the provinces have to choose between maintaining a health program and maintaining a core area initiative, a child care program in some small community, we know what choice they will make because we know where all the fuss is and we are all politicians and we know what people are concerned about. But it is a mean and miserable attitude that has to be drawn to the attention of the Canadian public and we have to form a coalition to stop it.

Our party has a fundamental disagreement with the NDP on this issue and this came out in the committee and in today's debate and the way in which they wish to

have the act revised. They avoided discussion on clause 4 today because in committee they acceded that it was better to have clause 4 than not to have it at all.

My argument is that one has to be very careful in acceding to any government, particularly this government with a very right wing agenda, the total authority to arbitrarily choose who is going to be vulnerable and who is going to pay the price for a good health care system.

The payment for a Canadian health care system is both a national and a provincial responsibility. We all benefit from it and as taxpayers, we all contribute to it. As such, it must be maintained in the context of Canada's taxation system in Canadian priorities and health and social legislation as one of our highest priorities.

In answering the health needs of Canadians, we cannot walk away from other needs. It is not as nice to be talking about the needs of poor people and the needs of aboriginal people and nobody really wants to dirty their hands by saying they really need a lot of money, they need a lot of resources. Everyone wants to walk from that.

Our party wants it to be known that we are not going to walk away from this. We are not going to accede to legislation which allows the government to pick and choose who it is going to help and who it is going to hurt in order to maintain a health care system. It is the responsibility of the federal government to organize its house so Canadians feel secure that their health system is protected and at the same time that other groups are not going to be abandoned. Our party is willing to oppose this legislation at every step of the way. In conclusion, I would just like to touch briefly upon another point that I am sure many other members of the House will raise and discuss in more detail, and that is that this bill is the introduction of several what appear to be minor changes to see to the implementation of the Unemployment Insurance Act.

Subsequent to the introduction of this legislation, this government has seen the economy tumble even more dramatically than it has tumbled before. In the spring we are going to be faced with perhaps hundreds of thousands of Canadians, without exaggeration, whose UI benefits are running out and who are going to be forced for the first time in their lives to go to welfare.