

The Address—Mr. Trudeau

Mr. Trudeau: I would like to deal with medicare which is another example the Leader of the Opposition gave this morning. He managed to wax very indignant about the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Miss Bégin) who is "going around trying to create a feeling in the people that medicare was threatened". I noted the words. He said that medicare was a sacred trust and that he would stand by it. I saw the rolling applause, even among those who had spoken and voted against it some years ago. He said it was a sacred trust, Mr. Speaker, that all it needed was more money and the Minister of Finance was going to give it more money; therefore what was the big fuss about and why was the Minister of National Health and Welfare so agitated? On the one hand, he blamed the federal Government for in 1978 having brought in the Established Programs, Financing, the EPF block funding.

An Hon. Member: That was 1977.

Mr. Trudeau: I stand corrected, 1977. He said that that was based on GNP and population growth and that is what had gone wrong with the system. I have news for him. It is because of that system that another \$780 million was announced by the Minister of Finance in Vancouver. The GNP has grown more than the pessimistic views held by the Tory Party. So the system works to give more money and somehow the Leader of the Opposition criticizes the system. What is worse, he criticizes the system without checking that if we had kept the old system, the one that prevailed before 1977 and the one that was based on a 50-50 deal, the provinces would have received in those intervening years some \$2.4 billion less than they received under the new system.

● (1440)

What is this sacred trust, when this Government is transferring some \$12 billion this year under block funding and is adding another \$780 million, give or take a few million? Somehow, the Leader of the Opposition says that we have created the problem, that if only the provinces still had more money there would be no problem. Of course there would be no problem if they had still more money, but he has just heard the figures which indicate that the system is not underfunded; it is funded more than under the previous system. This year it will be funded more than had been foreseen by the budgets of the various Ministers. Therefore, it is not underfunded.

Maybe it is underphilosophized by some of the Premiers of the Tory provinces who bring in user fees and are permitting extra billing. These are the two essential questions, the ones that have been debated in this country for several years now and on which we had a royal commission report. What is the position of the Leader of the Opposition on extra billing? What is his position on user fees? There is not a word. There is not a word because he knows that if he were opposed to those he would run into some problem with the provinces who philosophically want user fees. For some reason or other they do not remember that when this Party brought in medicare legislation some 17 years ago—and it was the first act of my Government after I was elected in June of 1968 to bring that legislation into effect in July of 1968—we promised then that

never again in this country would people not have access to universal medicare and medical aid because they were too poor.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: Never again would middle income families face financial ruin because some lasting illness or emergency operation caused them to dip into all of their savings. We said never again and we meant it. We meant it then and we mean it now. That is why we are going to introduce legislation, so that there will not be extra billing and there will not be deterrent fees.

We will not just say that it is the provinces' problem and we will solve it by throwing money at it. It is not a question of money. Alberta has a lot of money. Why would the Leader of the Opposition give them more money so that they change their philosophy, which is one of introducing and permitting extra billing? How will he solve this problem by throwing money at it, particularly when he is going to balance the budget?

It is a matter of Tory mentality, not a matter of dollars and cents. Let me tell all those Canadians out there who think it is time for a change that if they elect a Tory Party they better not be sick.

Some Hon. Members: Hear, hear!

Mr. Trudeau: The Leader of the Opposition has mocked our national energy policy. He has said there are no redeeming features in that policy. Well, there must be some redeeming features. The Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Chrétien) will be talking about that in the House on Monday, I believe, but it seems to me that I have seen some redeeming figures. I have seen that in Canada lands and in the offshore, investment in spending has gone up from \$282 million in 1978 to \$1.8 billion in 1982. That is an increase of more than 600 per cent in four years. I have seen total investment in exploration, exploitation and discovery between 1979—the year my hon. friend's Party was in government—and 1983 has gone up to \$5.6 billion, which is an increase of 70 per cent over 1979. I have seen revenue in the oil and gas industry between those years go from \$4.6 billion to \$11.8 billion. So it cannot be all that terrible, Mr. Speaker, this national energy policy which, according to the Opposition, will see its name changed. They will probably call it the American energy policy.

What is the essential thrust of the policy? I suppose there are three thrusts. The first is to ensure self-reliance in petroleum energy by the end of the decade. We are well on the way to attaining that, thanks to conservation measures and also, I must admit, thanks in part to the fact that there has been less consumption as a result of an economic slowdown.

We are well on the way to attaining the 50 per cent Canadian control and ownership which is obviously displeasing to some of the multinationals who prefer to keep control and ownership of this Canadian resource.