

*The Address*

The real threat to our social programs is the debt-deficit crisis. Ignoring this problem will surely see us on the path that New Zealand followed. It ignored its debt-deficit crisis and lost its health care system in one day. Now it has new measures like advertising on its ambulances simply to pay for the fuel.

This should be a truly non-partisan question in my view and one that transcends all party lines since health care is number one for Canadians, Reformers and the member for Macleod.

Just before taking my seat in this House I delivered by Caesarean section a 6-pound, 15-ounce baby boy, Zachary David Birney. As I held that little child in my arms and washed him off and handed him to a delighted father, nothing could be happier. That infant, however, owes to the federal treasury over \$17,400. This debt is wrong. This mortgage on his future is immoral. We in this House are the guardians of that debt. I dedicate my service in this House to the physical and financial health of all the Zachary David Birneys.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger):** In fairness to the hon. member for Macleod, I was simply indicating that he had approximately one minute left. If you have any other remarks or comments you would like to make in the one minute remaining, I will be glad to give you the floor. Otherwise we will go back to five minutes of questions or comments.

**Mr. Jim Jordan (Leeds—Grenville):** Mr. Speaker, I want to congratulate my colleague for Macleod on his maiden speech in the House. I understand that he is a very renowned surgeon. I do not know if that is an exaggeration or not, but I was told that.

I was kind of curious when he mentioned the drain that Canada has had in its medical profession. That has been going on for a number of years. We invested in 600, 700 or 800 highly trained people and then lost them.

Does he see any simple solution to that? For what reasons would highly trained Canadian professionals leave their country and go to a neighbouring country? There must be some attraction there. I am sure the hon. member for Macleod has wondered about that. I have wondered about it. I know that some of them come back. What did they go for in the first place? After a while did they get disillusioned? What brings them back to Canada? What could we be doing in our system to discourage them from going in the first place? Do we not have enough resources to accommodate them? Do we not pay them enough? I do not know. I am asking the question.

Perhaps the hon. member for Macleod as a professional, a doctor, would like to give his interpretation of that problem. It is a big problem in this country to lose those highly trained, highly specialized and very expensive people from our society.

**Mr. Hill (Macleod):** Mr. Speaker, I am honoured to be called a very distinguished surgeon. Possibly only in my own mind am I so distinguished.

To the member's question as to why there is a tremendous drain in our country on our medical resources, it is an increasing drain and the figures I gave are quite alarming. It was the highest number that had ever departed and this was in 1992.

● (1240)

Most of my colleagues who leave this country depart for one of three reasons. First, there is the financial reason. The pay is much better in the U.S.. The second reason that I hear is the bureaucratic meddling in their affairs. It is bureaucratically difficult in medicine. Third, there are freedom issues, taxation and so on.

Primarily these issues revolve around money. The social standing of a physician in our country is still fairly secure so I do not think that is a major issue. I do not have the answer to this particular problem. I simply say that protecting our medical environment is very important and I hope to be able to do that somewhat in this House.

[Translation]

**Mr. Gilbert Fillion (Chicoutimi):** Mr. Speaker, I must congratulate the hon. member on the quality of his message concerning health. We all know that health is very important. But, to stay in good health, we must offer favourable conditions. That is why we should keep our social programs.

What I liked about the hon. member's speech is that he was suggesting that the government freeze transfer payments to the provinces. Not only freeze these payments but also try and find additional savings in other government expenditures.

I would ask the hon. member whether, in addition to health, he was also thinking of social housing. We all know that inadequate housing can have a detrimental effect on people's health and lead to massive expenditures for the state. These people are usually families and households where the main breadwinners are women. It is under such circumstances that children are ill-treated and become sick. I would ask the hon. member whether he considers the social housing issue as important as the health issue, so that we can continue to protect the health of Canadians?

[English]

**Mr. Hill (Macleod):** Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for his question.

I mentioned that health care has the highest priority for Canadians and this is not something that I manufactured. This is something that I learned from studies. Social housing does not have the highest priority for all Canadians and so I would not put the same emphasis on it as I put on health care.