

Supply

Mr. Riis: Get to Saskatchewan.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): I will get to Saskatchewan.

Mr. de Jong: Collect the money somewhere else.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, it is very interesting that when they speak, they want to be listened to. They are very capable of handing it out, but they do not like taking it. If deficit financing is such a successful policy, and if it creates the numbers of jobs as they keep insisting in the House, why is it that in 1968 our accumulated deficit was some \$18 billion and our unemployment rate was substantially below what it is now, and today our annual deficit runs in the order of \$35 billion and we have 1.4 million people unemployed? In fact, our annual deficit is double the deficit which we accumulated in our first 100 years of history, and our accumulated deficit is now some \$190 billion.

● (1630)

Those are issues that they do not address or want to address. They like to live in that world of theirs in which they feel that somehow you should spend more money, even if you do not have it. They have even given advice to go to New York to get more money and give more interest to those who buy the Treasury bills. I say to them they like to have it both ways, but they do not like to look at the responsibility of their suggestions.

I will be even more specific than that, because they say that they are the most conscious of the needs of Canadians. Let me give them a very specific example. The best example I can give is the Manitoba NDP Government. Let us take a look at its record. What did it do? Now I have their attention. What happened when the \$25 increase was added to the Guaranteed Income Supplement for those retired Canadians who have the lowest income? What was the Manitoba NDP Government's response?

Mr. Riis: Probably the same as B.C.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, that is an interesting comment that the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap (Mr. Riis) just made. He said probably the same as the B.C. Government. How many times have we heard them in this House condemn the British Columbia Government as the most hard-hearted Government on the face on the earth? Now he identifies with it and says that the Manitoba NDP Government would do the same thing.

Ms. Mitchell: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. I wonder, Mr. Speaker, if you would remind the Minister that he now is a Minister of Government and we would like to hear, and pensioners would like to hear, the justification for the program that is so hard on seniors. He is not really in Opposition. If he wants to take his time as an opposition Member—

An Hon. Member: He is a statesman.

Ms. Mitchell: Fine, but I thought he was a Minister. Let us hear something that is going to define government policy.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, they do not want to be reminded of their actions. They just want to make their point for political reasons—

Mr. Riis: Do not make a political speech, make your point.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): I am going to make the point. No matter how much harassment, I am going to make the point.

Mr. Marchi: Mr. Speaker, I hate to interrupt the Hon. Minister on his debate, but I would simply like to appeal to the House and to the Chair that perhaps he can address himself to the motion rather than NDP—

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Charest): Order, please. The Hon. Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp).

Mr. Epp (Provencher): Mr. Speaker, I do not want to disappoint the Liberal Member. I will get to him, too. I say to the Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap what happened in Manitoba was that of the \$25 increase, the Manitoba Government, looking at its situation and its financial reality, reduced the amount of money to those very Manitobans who were getting a shelter allowance by \$8. When asked the reason why, the argument was not that they wanted to do it or that they preferred to do it but that they had to because of the deficit situation that they were in. The point I make to him is whether it is an NPD Government, a Liberal Government or a Conservative Government—

Mr. Riis: You said we do not care about the deficit. Now you are saying we do. You cannot have it both ways.

Mr. Epp (Provencher): I am saying to you very clearly that you in the federal NDP Party put those points forward, but when you have to take Government, as in Manitoba, then suddenly the shoe starts pinching a bit because the proposals that are made in this House by the NDP are not in the same manner or the same reality that that Government has to deal with.

Let me give another example. Take a look at the percentage of increase that has been given to Manitoba hospitals and to Manitoba post-secondary educational institutions under the present situation.

Ms. Mitchell: Are we in the Manitoba legislature or are we in the federal House?

Mr. Epp (Provencher): The only point I am making, and I hope he understands it, is this: regardless of what he wants to say in this House or regardless of the motions he puts forward, Governments, whether at the provincial level or the federal level, all recognize that one cannot continue deficit financing without it starting to have an effect on the very programs we want to maintain. That is the point I am making to him and, being a responsible Member and the finance critic of the NDP, I think he recognizes that. He might not want to say it for