

*Supply*

It is the second time this week I have seen this party engage in the most base kind of politics. Earlier this week, the constitutional critic for the New Democratic Party, who says he has spent the last year of his life, along with others, in the interest of Canada trying to keep this country together and united, trying to keep this country from severing into many pieces, stood up in the House and commented on a story that was in the news about RCMP break-ins, illegal break-ins, of the Parti Quebecois in Quebec.

Even though there has already been a royal commission of enquiry into that affair which has laid out all the facts before the people of Canada, which has said that the RCMP acted illegally and without the knowledge of the government of the day or the Cabinet of the day, in the interest of national unity, the NDP said: "Let us have a royal commission of enquiry into the royal commission of enquiry."

The NDP was saying it should have received an award as best supporting actor of the Bloc Quebecois. The NDP was saying that in the interest of scoring cheap political points, it was prepared to tell the sovereignists of Quebec and the separatists in Quebec that about their worst nightmare, the notion that somehow a national government, any national government, is conspiring to spy on people; that any national government, Liberal, NDP or Conservative, would go out and engage in illegal activities is a valid assumption. The NDP attempted to validate the worst kind of nonsense about federalism in the interests of narrow, partisan political advantage. That is what it did and it should think about what that kind of statement does to this country. It should think about what that kind of gesture does to the glue—what little is left—that keeps this country together?

That is exactly what the NDP has done again today with this motion. It is pure hypocrisy. I come from Newfoundland and Labrador, one of the poorest provinces, if not the poorest, in Canada. Just as has happened in NDP Saskatchewan, NDP Ontario and NDP British Columbia, Newfoundland and Labrador has had health care cutbacks. I do not like it. Nobody in Newfoundland and Labrador likes it, and we have had those cutbacks because there has been a reduction of the transfer payments from the national government to the provinces for provision of health care in this country.

Does anyone know what the single biggest contributing factor to the continuing decline of health care in little old Newfoundland and Labrador is? The biggest single

contributor to cutbacks in health care in the poorest provinces of Canada is the stalled economic engine in the province of Ontario. Who has their foot on the gas in the province of Ontario? Who has got the gear shift stuck in neutral in the province of Ontario? Who is running the wheels right off the car in the province of Ontario? Premier Bob Rae and his NDP administration.

I hope those members of the NDP, who have crawled out of this Chamber, who have gone to find cover out by the coffee machine, understand intrinsically in their heart of hearts that this base political motion today is indefensible. I hope they understand that the debate today is not about health care, as initiated by the New Democratic Party.

• (1130)

I am convinced there were members opposite who were embarrassed in their seats. They know that I speak absolutely the truth. Some of them are going to be forced to get to their feet and show what great hockey players they are, what great acolytes of Gretzky they are, as they try to stick-handle their way out of the embarrassing mess they have created today.

I hope at least one of them will come clean and admit that the country needs a discussion about health care. Those of us who believe in universality of health care need to pull like-minded people together. We need to ensure that our health care system survives, because it is one of the few benefits of Canadian citizenship that is constant across this land. It does not matter whether one lives in Newfoundland or Labrador or in Ontario. It does not matter whether one is rich or poor, whether one speaks English or French, or whether one is gentile or Jew. It does not matter whether one is black or white. As a condition of citizenship in this country one is offered the best service that can be provided, and it ought to remain that way. We are committed to that kind of universal access to our health care system.

However, we are not going to defend health care by playing political games. We are not going to defend health care by trying to shoot the messenger. The reason there have been cutbacks in Newfoundland is that money has been cut back for health care to Newfoundland, a Liberal government. The reason there have been cutbacks in Saskatchewan is that money has been cut back in the province of Saskatchewan, an NDP government. The reason there have been cutbacks in Nova Scotia is that money has been cut back in transfer payments to Nova Scotia, a Progressive Conservative government. The reason there were cutbacks in British Columbia before