

single parents and needy individuals. The purpose of the child tax credit from the very beginning was to assist those people who need help the most. It is clear that the Newfoundland Government's policy, which was stated in documents distributed in welfare offices across the province, was a clear violation of the spirit of the child tax credit as enacted by former Liberal federal Governments.

● (1815)

Notwithstanding the statement by the Minister of National Health and Welfare about how they were going to preserve universality, preserve the child tax credit, did he use this opportunity to send a clear message to the provinces? Did he use this opportunity to say no, you are not going to touch that money because it belongs to Shirley Parsons and all of those single parents who are out there struggling to make ends meet? Did he lay down the law and tell Brian Peckford and the Newfoundland Conservatives that they were not going to pay the provincial heating bills on the backs of poor single parents? No, he washed his hands of the issue and said it was not his fault, it was the fault of the Newfoundland Government, or it is a misunderstanding. Who cares that hundreds if not thousands of single parents are being gouged for their electrical bills.

In the same manner the Minister has washed his hands of the medical crisis in British Columbia. When confronted with a clear and present violation of the Canada Health Act, did the Minister fight for the rights of Canadians, as did the former Minister, Monique Bégin? Did the Minister go to the Government of British Columbia and say, Bill C-50 is a travesty, a violation of the Canada Health Act? Did he say that Bill C-50 must be nipped in the bud? No, Mr. Speaker, the Social Credit, cum Progressive Conservative Government in British Columbia, was aided and abetted by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, who has known about this violation of the Canada Health Act for months but has chosen to wash his hands of the issue because he does not have the political guts to go to his colleagues in the provinces and say that this Government is committed to ensuring accessibility under the Canada Health Act; this Government is committed to ensuring accessibility to the child tax credit for all those who need it.

No, Mr. Speaker, when push comes to shove this Government is prepared to kneel and bow and scrape to those provincial Governments who would utilize mechanisms like the child tax credit and the Canada Health Act for their own gain.

This Party introduced the child tax credit and the Canada Health Act, and we are going to fight for Canadians, a job which is not being done by this current Progressive Conservative Government.

[Translation]

Mrs. Monique B. Tardif (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Regional Industrial Expansion): Mr. Speaker, the Hon. Member for Hamilton-East (Ms. Copps) asked the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp) about the

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situation in Newfoundland where people were required to sign over their child tax credit before they could get any help from the Department of Social Services to pay their heating bills.

The Minister answered that officials in his Department had spoken with officials of the Newfoundland Government who had stated very clearly that it was not government policy to ask people to sign over their child tax credit before they could get any financial help. The provincial officials stated that the form signed by Shirley Parsons had never been approved by the Department of Social Services. They regretted what had happened to Mrs. Parsons and informed the officials of the Department of National Health and Welfare that she would get the financial assistance needed to pay her heating bill without signing over her child tax credit.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to read now a Telex sent to the Minister of National Health and Welfare by the Hon. R. C. Brett, Minister of Social Services in Newfoundland:

[English]

This will serve to confirm information provided by my officials during the past few days that it is not the policy of the Newfoundland Department of Social Services to require or request assignments to the Department of Child Tax Credit payments for any purpose. Unfortunately this did occur in error in a very small number of cases. The matter has been corrected and the practice discontinued. The clients concerned have been notified accordingly.

We regret this occurrence and any difficulty this may have caused you.

[Translation]

This convinced the Minister of National Health and Welfare, Mr. Speaker, and should convince all Members that the Newfoundland Government does not require that people sign over their child tax credit before they can receive help.

I want to assure the Hon. Member for Hamilton-East (Ms. Copps) and all the Members, that Newfoundland abides by the terms of the agreement signed with the Federal Government under the Public Assistance Act. I would like to add that the federal Government does not require that the Child Tax Credit be considered as income when determining eligibility to provincial social assistance, and all provinces exclude it totally in their social programs.

● (1820)

PUBLIC SERVICE—FEDERAL UNIONS—GOVERNMENT POSITION.
(B) PENSION NEGOTIATIONS

Mr. Jean-Robert Gauthier (Ottawa-Vanier): Mr. Speaker, the subject this evening is Public Service pensions and the promise made by this Government to maintain indexing for the pensions for which public servants have paid premiums and to which they are entitled.

The House will recall that I asked the President of the Treasury Board (Mr. de Cotret), following his statement in the House, to table the so-called agreements he signed with the two largest unions, and I am referring to the Public Service Alliance and the Professional Institute. The President of the Treasury Board refused to do so at the time, saying that if we