

[English]

We need to allocate our funds to prevent health problems before they arise, so that we make better use of services in the community and so we adopt only those technologies which are efficient and cost-effective and which produce real improvements to a patient's length and quality of life.

Some people argue that we should simply transfer all of the federal money to the provinces and give them *carte blanche* to spend without restriction.

I do not believe that it would be desirable for Canadians to do so.

For example, Preston Manning, the Leader of the Reform Party of Canada, believes the federal government should tax away the money from federal taxpayers, give it to the provinces and then have no say whatsoever in setting national standards. He is suggesting it simply hand over \$14 billion with no strings attached. To my mind, that money gives Canadians 14 billion reasons to expect that the federal government should maintain the principles of medicare.

In the cold, hard language of dollars and cents, the argument is both logical and sound. If you invest money you have a right to say how that money is spent.

I believe the case for national standards is built on more than just an economic right born of a sizeable financial commitment. It goes much deeper than that. Canadians see these standards as a fundamental right of citizenship, one that reflects qualities and principles that are quintessentially Canadian: a belief in treating all people with dignity and equality; a commitment to fairness and justice; a conviction that economic freedom and a market economy are not inconsistent with caring and compassion for those less fortunate than ourselves.

By all means, let us debate today whether MPs still support medicare. We can even debate what the federal share of medicare should be. Most important, it is time for straight talk with Canadians about where that money is coming from, whether it can be spent more effectively and what share of our national wealth we are prepared to put into health care.

Sadly, answers to those questions were missing when my hon. friend from Winnipeg spoke in defence of his motion earlier today. Canadians have a right to answers

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to those questions to as subsequent Liberal and NDP members rise to speak.

Canadians are watching this debate and they are expecting much more from each of us than cynical promises that we will simply spend more of their money without having to worry about where it is coming from. They are too sophisticated to be fooled by political show games.

Those who love Canada's social programs must do more than simply love them to death. Just as we know you cannot spend yourself rich, we know that year after year of uncontrolled deficits will not make our social programs stronger; they can only threaten those programs' very existence.

That is the issue before the House today. The young people of Canada in particular ask for honesty from all of us when explaining how we propose to deal with these issues. It is not enough any more for this generation to continue to spend today and to simply send the bills to our kids. Already that debt of over \$15,000 for every man, woman and child in Canada stalks the next generation of Canadians. It is time for us today to deal with that issue.

In the hours remaining in today's debate, let us put aside political posturing and let us have straight answers to these important questions.

Canadians have a right to expect no less.

Mr. Rey Pagtakhan (Winnipeg North): Mr. Speaker, I am glad to hear the minister speak of the need for honesty in government and I challenge the government to live up to that call.

Speaking of honesty, I have here a write-up from the *Winnipeg Free Press* which says that apparently there is a secret Statistics Canada study. The article says the report may not be revealed yet in public but that it exists, and that 44 per cent of Canada's colossal \$400 billion national debt is due to tax breaks for corporations and the wealthy, and that another 50 per cent is caused by the compounding growth of interest payments applied on interest. Only 6 per cent can be attributed to living beyond our means.

On this point, my question to the minister is: Is it true that there is such a Statistics Canada study and would he table that report in the House of Commons?