

*Adjournment Debate*

Our medicare system is in danger of breaking apart because this government does not know how to start promoting the health of Canadians and now we see it cutting even more.

We see the discontinuation of the Consumer Products Safety Program, the discontinuation of the campaign against drinking and driving that alone has probably saved thousands of lives in this country since it was initiated.

Even more desperately, we see the elderly and the sick told that they are going to have to wait even longer for potentially life-saving drugs to be evaluated and approved by government. This government will not provide the people and the resources necessary for those new pharmaceuticals that can save lives, reduce pain and suffering, keep people alive and functioning and out of hospitals. This government does not think these kinds of services are important to Canadians.

We are going to see seniors waiting increased lengths of time for their pension cheques, families waiting for family allowances. We are already seeing the unemployed waiting up to six weeks or even longer for cheques to feed, clothe and house their families when they cannot have a job. There are going to be 3.5 million of those Canadians this year.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** The hon. member has one minute left.

**Mrs. Catterall:** The government has delivered seven years of slashing people, slashing dollars and now it is even worse. As the Deputy Minister of Health and Welfare said: "For years now we have been doing more with less. Now we have to do less with less". It is the people of Canada who are suffering when the availability of services to the public are cut and when the people who deliver those services are cut; it is not the government, not the politicians and not us in this Chamber.

**Mr. Jean-Guy Hudon (Parliamentary Secretary to the President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister responsible for Constitutional Affairs):** Mr.

Speaker, reductions or cuts to federal programs or services are always tough to make. But when you are faced with the staggering deficit in the country then you ought to get spending under control. That is what the federal government is doing.

I want to tell the hon. member that despite some reductions in services and programs, Canadians can still count on the Department of National Health and Welfare to look after their safety and health. It remains a top priority for this government and the department. We have a health care system in Canada that is second to none and we intend to keep it that way.

If you look at where the impact of the budget reductions will be, you will quickly see that they will occur across a broad range of areas within the department so that the impact will be as minimal as possible.

I want to assure all Canadians that high priority areas such as food and drugs, safety, family violence programs, AIDS initiatives and many others will not be affected.

I think any fair analysis of the actions taken by the Department of National Health and Welfare to implement the recent budget reductions would show that while there is some impact, over-all Canadians will continue to be well served.

The government has tackled the deficit. It has cut spending and attacked waste and inefficiency in the government's operations. As well, it has implemented structural reforms to improve the growth potential of the Canadian economy.

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski):** The motion to adjourn the House has now been deemed to have been adopted.

Pursuant to Standing Order made on Monday, June 3, 1991, this House stands adjourned until Monday, June 10, 1991 at eleven o'clock pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 18.10 p.m.