

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

Recently in Saskatchewan the government has stated that the costs of medicare are rising so rapidly that it would be necessary to introduce a deterrent fee of \$1.50 per patient per office visit in order to save approximately \$5 million which the government—and I quite believe this—claims it does not have. This money is necessary to meet the increase in costs of medical care in Saskatchewan. This deterrent fee will start on April 15. In addition, Mr. Speaker, \$2.50 will be charged the average patient for every day that he is in hospital.

Since it seems obvious that such catastrophic deterrent fees will penalize those who are least able to pay, surely it is equally obvious that if this government will state unequivocally that the grants for medical care are conditional upon their use for medical care only in the province of Saskatchewan and other provinces, this will obviate the necessity for the introduction of this deterrent fee.

Since the amount coming to Saskatchewan in one year will be somewhere in the \$12 million to \$14 million range, this would mean that this year somewhere in the neighbourhood of \$6 million would be available for the people of Saskatchewan and would save them from the imposition of deterrent fees. It would also save them from the burden of additional double taxation.

An answer at this time from the minister, or from his charming parliamentary secretary, would mean a great deal not only to the people of our province but to the people of every province. It would prevent an indiscriminate use of medical care funds for the purpose of balancing provincial budgets which have been overburdened by other expenditure on such things as highways, public buildings and the like. So I ask the minister through his parliamentary secretary to do the people of Saskatchewan a favour and assure them that the federal medical care funds will be used and designated for the purpose for which they were intended, namely the provision of medical care for the people not only of Saskatchewan but in every part of Canada.

• (10:10 p.m.)

Mrs. Margaret Rideout (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, the payments made by the federal government to a province under the Medical Care Act are based on the national average per capita cost actually

[Mr. Brand.]

incurred by the medical care plans of all participating provinces in payments to medical practitioners for insured services provided to insured residents of those provinces.

Consequently the federal financial contribution during any fiscal year is a reimbursement of moneys actually spent during that fiscal year and there is no designation as to what use the province must put it.

Co-insurance charges payable by or on behalf of an individual patient are not recognized as provincial costs in determining the national average per capita cost.

IMMIGRATION—ADMISSION OF SEASONAL FARM LABOUR FROM WEST INDIES

Mr. J. E. Madill (Dufferin-Simcoe): My question goes to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration and it relates to the subject I raised on Thursday, March 14—the bringing in of seasonal labour from the West Indies. My supplementary question, when I asked why the minimum wage rate had been so drastically increased, was ruled out of order.

To preface my remarks I should like to place on record telegrams received from growers and distributors of vegetables in the Bradford and Holland Marsh area which are nationally known. There is no end to the number of these telegrams; I shall place only a few of them on record so that the minister may understand how urgent this question is; the growing season is fast approaching and greenhouse work is being carried out in preparation for the coming crop and in anticipation of this labour being used.

The first telegram reads:

Strenuously object to minimum hourly rate of \$1.45 for West Indies casual labour. This will only speed up the primary producers being forced out of business and raise the living cost of our population. These people are happy to work for our minimum rate of \$1.25. If impossible to change suggest discontinue unemployment benefits for months prior to November to divert local labour for the harvest.

This comes from Springdale Farms at Bradford. Another telegram of the same nature comes from Hillside Gardens, Bradford:

We strongly object to hourly rate of \$1.45 for West Indies casual labour. With transportation and housing etc. this comes to two dollars plus. Would be happy to use Canadian labour for this short period of time if available.

The following telegram was sent by Federal Farms:

Vigorously protest increase imposed for West Indian farm labour. Rate in addition to transportation, free housing, far exceeds minimum wage set