

system. This must not be lost sight of when considering elements of the over-all federal proposal.

The levels of the basic per capita contributions would be determined in relation to the costs of existing insured services of the current hospital and medical care insurance programs. Provision has been included to accommodate a nationally insured optometric benefit. As already indicated, the basic per capita payments would be available for use by the provinces for the whole range of health services.

A special thrust fund, to which I alluded earlier, has been proposed at a level of \$640 million and would be payable to the provinces over a six-year period to assist in the reorganization and improvement of the provincial health care delivery systems. These funds would be for mutually agreeable projects designed to promote improvements in the efficiency of these systems. I should emphasize that the thrust funds would not be required to be matched by the provinces. The thrust fund would be made available for the capital and operating costs of acceptable provincial programs designed to bring about the reorganization and development of the health care delivery system into an integrated mechanism. The thrust fund would also help to cushion the time lag between the implementation of reforms and the appearance of resulting economies.

The thrust funds would also be made available to help finance a service or a program which will clearly substitute for or avoid the expansion of existing and unnecessarily expensive methods of providing necessary care. They would not be made available to simply shore up the existing system by being merely used as a supplement to the federal per capita payments in meeting the operating costs of the present system. It is not intended for the provision of new services or for the building of new facilities, nor is it intended to meet the costs of additional insured benefits for services not now covered, except where these would substitute for costly services which are presently insured, nor to support research, innovative studies, surveys or the like. It must be recognized, however, that many of the acceptable programs will in fact be breaking new ground.

Examples of areas where potential improvements exist and for which thrust fund support may be approved include home care, programs that effectively take patients out of hospital, costs for community health centres and other facilities providing ambulatory care, and the development and increased use of allied health personnel to avoid the unnecessary use of high-cost professional services. It would be up to each province to determine the reforms which are the most promising according to its own particular situation, and which will likely find acceptance for thrust fund support. In a nutshell, the thrust fund is aimed at producing reform and rationalization in the way in which health care services are made available.

Criticisms and reservations have been expressed by the provinces throughout these many discussions and the federal government has tried to respond by making appropriate modifications in the proposal. A major recommendation of the provinces is that the federal government

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commit itself to some degree of risk sharing in the event that unexpectedly high provincial costs are encountered.

The federal government is very serious about its intention to moderate the escalation of health care costs and to make it easier for the provinces to effect significant improvements in the way health care services are provided. It is sincerely hoped that all provinces share the federal views in this matter, and that agreement can be reached on new financing arrangements which will provide to the provinces the desired flexibility in the use of federal contributions and create the framework for the introduction of less costly but equally effective health care services.

Personally, I look forward to participating in the federal-provincial conference of finance and health ministers which will take place this coming Friday and I share with the minister the hope that the agreements which will be reached at that and subsequent conferences will prove to be of significant and lasting benefit to all Canadians.

Mr. Otto Jelinek (High Park-Humber Valley): Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by saying what a great honour it is for me to be a member of this House and to sit with such a distinguished group of men and women from across Canada. I feel it speaks highly for our democratic system of government when a refugee from Czechoslovakia can have the opportunity to be elected to represent other Canadians in the governing of this great country.

• (1740)

My constituency of High Park-Humber Valley rests on the shores of Lake Ontario and is a part of west Toronto. It is a riding which is truly representative of the strength and vitality of our country. It is made up of Canadians who represent a wide variety of cultural heritages, sharing not only the beautiful and scenic open-spaced park from which the riding receives its name but also the winding Humber Valley through which the now too polluted Humber River flows.

On the west side of the river there is a part of the new burgeoning borough of Etobicoke, and on the east the old village of Swansea and a large section of York township which used to be known as west Toronto. It is a riding of diversity and complexities, an exciting and interesting place in which to live and for me to represent. That is why I regret that the federal electoral boundaries commission has seen fit to make major changes in the riding's boundaries.

The greatest strength of this constituency, and indeed of all Canada, lies in its people of various cultural heritages and backgrounds. The quality of the lives of all Canadians has been enriched by the number of cultures that have joined to form our society, and it is important that we maintain this rich cultural heritage while adapting to changing conditions in Canada. I believe in Canadian unity and will play any part I can to ensure that this unity is maintained in every sense of the word.

I was appalled, as were most Canadians, at the recent comments of the Minister of Transport (Mr. Marchand) and of the Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) which attempted to create an issue by accusing our party of dividing the country. To make Canadian unity a partisan issue is very dangerous indeed and can only create problems, not solve