

Government Orders

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, I have a brief question for the hon. member. I enjoyed his speech very much. I wonder if he could take the House into his confidence and tell us whether or not the New Democratic government in Ontario is going to introduce a bill along the same lines as this one. I noticed that government has taken to copying almost every move of the Conservative government in this House. When the Conservative government cuts back transfers to the provinces the NDP reduces transfers to the municipalities to 1 per cent. It does the same for school boards and for hospitals. Everybody gets 1 per cent now in NDP Ontario.

The NDP says the reason why it is doing that is because of the terrible deficit that was left by the Liberals, and of course the Conservatives in Ottawa, eight years later, are still saying: "The reason we are cutting back the transfers to the provinces is because of the terrible debt left by the Liberals". We all know that the story in both cases is pure hogwash. It is simply an unwillingness to accept responsibility for its own incompetence and the terrible recession that has been brought about by these two governments.

I want to know if the member can tell us, given the apparent willingness of the NDP to copy everything that the Conservatives do in Ottawa, if he thinks the New Democratic Party government in Ontario is going to bring in a bill like this.

Mr. Karpoff: Mr. Speaker, the Ontario government has had to face a number of disastrous economic problems caused by free trade, the high dollar, the high interest rates and the legacy left by the Liberals. The Liberals increased the spending 10 per cent a year instead of trying to develop an economic base that could be diversified and stand some of the pressures around a recession.

Provinces have to pass along some of the cutbacks that this government is forcing on them, particularly through health care. That great Liberal bastion, Newfoundland, as a result of transfer payments had to lay off 10 per cent of all of its nursing staff last year. That is the way the Liberals did it.

An hon. member: That is what is going on in the hospitals in Ontario now.

Mr. Karpoff: They simply laid off 10 per cent because of the cutbacks, but one thinks that philosophically they are on the same wavelength. We now have the Liberal premiers, Wells, McKenna and Bourassa, talking about the introduction of user fees. All the Liberal premiers are advocating a two-tiered health care system, one for the rich and one for the poor, with the introduction of user fees. They say: "Well, that is because of the cutbacks from the federal government in terms of EPF".

I have some empathy with them in terms of the cutbacks from the federal government when they are talking about health care: \$64 billion has been taken out of health care; another \$32 billion has been taken out in post-secondary education. Provinces like Newfoundland are undergoing a crisis in employment. If Newfoundland's rate of unemployment was the same as Ontario is having right now, it would feel itself very lucky.

We now have a situation where the fisheries is caught between a rock and a hard place, where in order to conserve any of the fisheries for the future generations, hard realities of conservation are going to have to be brought in now. There are difficulties, but you do not see the NDP governments talking about introducing user fees for health care.

The Liberals in Newfoundland had to lay off 10 per cent of their staff and their solution is simply: "Let's bring in user fees. Let's make sure the poor and the middle income persons do not have access to an adequate health care system".

We have a situation now developing in this country where the New Democratic premiers, the four of them, are standing up and saying: "We will protect our national health care program in spite of this federal government and its cutbacks". Premiers Bourassa, McKenna and Wells are advocating the introduction of health care user fees.

• (1250)

[*Translation*]

Mr. Peter Milliken (Kingston and the Islands): Mr. Speaker, what a loss of time for this House to have to consider such a ridiculous bill today. It is indeed ridiculous. I fail to see why the government has introduced such legislation. Obviously, it did nothing to put an end to the disastrous economic policies it has been pursuing.