

Supply

Liberals have done with medicare, what he did not like about what the Liberals had done with medicare, and what he thinks they should have done with medicare.

I studied history and, as far as I know, this party on the left has never been in power so it has done nothing about medicare. Instead of continually criticizing what the Liberals have done, it should be glad that we have had a medicare program in Canada for many, many years. It is not perfect and nobody has ever said it is perfect, but it is a medicare plan that people in Canada have felt comfortable with.

Instead of arguing about something they are upset about because they did not do one single thing to get medicare in this country in that they have never been elected federally in this country, they should be protecting the medicare plan and using their energy in a positive way to make the government across the way keep our medicare in a whole unit that will help Canadians, all Canadians.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): The hon. member for Saint-Maurice. There are two minutes left.

Mr. Denis Pronovost (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, we just listened with great interest to a lively discussion between two real socialists. The NDP are clearly socialists, but the socialists in the Liberal Party do not always come across as the real thing.

In any case, Monique Bégin, once a member of cabinet under the Liberal government, said after the Budget was brought down that people should ignore the Liberal Opposition her own friends and stop listening to them because what they were saying about the Budget wasn't true. Mrs. Bégin said, the day after the Budget was brought down, that Mr. Wilson's latest budget did not in any way affect our medicare system in this country.

I think the hon. member should listen to this former minister who was part of the Trudeau government. Now that she has retired from the partisan side of political life, she tells us quite clearly: "Don't listen to the Liberal Opposition. They want to scare people". Just like the Liberals scared senior citizens in my riding, in Saint-Maurice, during the last federal election campaign, when they said: If you vote for the Conservatives and free

trade, all old age pensions in Saint-Maurice will be scrapped.

The Liberals are using the same kind of scare tactics again, but I think Canadians will ignore them and maintain their confidence in our national medicare system, a system we want to maintain and preserve for the years to come.

[*English*]

Ms. Phinney: Mr. Speaker somewhere during that little dissertation the hon. member mentioned listening to. I do not know what the government members do when they go back to their ridings. I wonder how many phone calls they get about this budget. I wonder how many people are phoning, wondering what is going to happen if they get sick or if the federal government continues to stop giving grants to the provincial government and there is not enough money for the hospitals.

I cannot believe that they even ever turn up in their constituency offices, and they are still talking the same way about listening. The party people across the floor should be listening to the people of Canada and they would not touch medicare; they would leave it the way it was.

Mr. Ross Belsher (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Transport): Mr. Speaker, it is a pleasure for me to join in this debate this afternoon.

However, I must point out to the people who are not here in the House but are out in listening land that the motion before us says "This House reaffirms its commitment to medicare". We on this side would dearly like to be able to vote for it. Nonetheless, by a quirk of the rules, it would be considered non-confidence in the government if we were to vote that way. It has been explained earlier, but I just wanted to go on record as restating that position. I will be voting with the government against this motion when the vote is taken at six o'clock this evening.

What I would like to do for the next few minutes is speak about some of the media coverage that we have had over the last few weeks regarding medicare. There certainly has not been any shortage of this media coverage.

Some of the headlines have been: "Strangling of Medicare", "Death of Medicare", "Limit on Transfer Funds Called Medicare Threat", and so on.