

Governor in Council indicated clearly what were the possibilities.

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### MEDICAL CARE

#### FEDERAL FUNDING—GOVERNMENT POSITION

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill):** Madam Speaker, my question is about the same matter as that brought up by the Hon. Member for Algoma, the conflicting messages we are getting from the Minister of National Health and Welfare and the Prime Minister vis-à-vis the federal Government's intention to withhold funds from Alberta, either under existing legislation or under any future legislation which may provide for that kind of capacity on the part of the federal Government.

My first question is directed to the Prime Minister. It seems to me that it is not good enough to say that your Minister is on the right track. I would hope you would want to say that about any of your Ministers; at least you would want to say that.

**Some Hon. Members:** Order.

**Mr. Blaikie:** Would you be more clear and indicate to the House whether, as you are reported to have done, you have ruled out the question of economic sanctions against Provinces—

**Some Hon. Members:** Order, order.

**Mr. Blaikie:**—which continue to violate national standards for medicare? Have you ruled those kinds of sanctions out?

**An Hon. Member:** Address the Chair.

**Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** Madam Speaker, may I answer the Member and confirm what I have often repeated in Canada in the last weeks, namely, that that particular decision, which would be to use the existing provision of withholding funds under legislation, has not been finalized yet by Cabinet.

As I have often said, following the basic philosophy of the Government which was so well expressed by the Prime Minister on Saturday in *Le Devoir*, if there is one case for universal in Canada, it is medicare. We are appealing to the Canadian public right now to make sure that we have understood well what we know for sure has been their wish for 20 years, namely, to strengthen medicare in the new Act, probably by introducing more adequate penalties to deal with each of the possible breaches of medicare—to strengthen it once and for all for another 20 or 30 years.

● (1440)

#### INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg-Birds Hill):** Madam Speaker, the Minister has indicated her intention to go beyond the

#### Oral Questions

penalties which are now available to her under the existing legislation, hopefully by having more flexible penalties in any new Canada Health Act. Can the Minister tell us when we are going to see the Canada Health Act when the long awaited document is going to be before us? Are we going to receive it before the end of June, as I have suggested many times in this House, so that pro medicare people would have a viable political option around which to rally? Or are we going to have to wait the Fall and have action on the erosion of medicare postponed once again?

**Some Hon. Members:** Order.

**Mr. Blaikie:** And if we are not going to receive it until the Fall, what are we going to get by the end of June—more homilies from the Minister, or are we going to get some kind of action?

**Hon. Monique Bégin (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** By the way, Madam Speaker, may I take the opportunity to thank the Hon. Member for his good offices. For the first time in four years one provincial Minister had the guts and the common sense, thinking he would have to be re-elected one day, to be on the side of medicare and of Canadians. I am referring, of course, to the Minister of Health and Manitoba, Mr. Laurent Desjardins. That was very welcome. In the same way, every one of the 22 million other Canadians is saying publicly that they are on the side of medicare. We believed the Provinces last May when they said they would be ready to control extra billing and user fees. Therefore, there were no requisite provisions to control user fees when suddenly the very provocative initiatives of Alberta, New Brunswick, and British Columbia are making it necessary to review the Act. As soon as it will be ready it will be presented to my colleagues first, and then the House.

#### FEDERAL-PROVINCIAL NEGOTIATIONS—PRIME MINISTER'S POSITION

**Hon. Jake Epp (Provencher):** Madam Speaker, my question is directed to the Prime Minister on the same subject. I do not believe the issue can be separated into some people or some provincial Governments not being in favour of medicare. I believe all Canadians want to see universal medicare preserved.

**Some Hon. Members:** Oh, oh!

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Epp:** It being the case that obviously there are negotiations which are critical in terms of the ability of the provincial Governments, and of the taxpayer, for that matter, to sustain programs, I would like to ask the Prime Minister, as he approaches these negotiations, whether he approaches them from the point of view that the federal will must prevail, or whether he looks at these negotiations in an attempt not only