

Supply

If, as has been predicted by health economists, the federal Tory government in trying to cure the ills of the health care system first continues to withdraw, as has been predicted by health care economists, its contributions and obligations to cost share health care in this country to a substantial extent, we may not have a system to reform at the end.

I submit and I challenge the government, as we reform the system, to continue to provide the adequate and necessary financial resources the provinces at this time badly need.

Mr. Joseph Volpe (Eglinton—Lawrence): Madam Speaker, of course I was pleased to second the amendment to the motion of my hon. colleague for Winnipeg North.

As will have been noticed over the course of this last hour, it was thanks to his intervention that we introduced an element of sanity and intelligence in the discussion. The Liberal caucus does take this debate seriously even though we were finally graced a few moments ago with a lone representative from the New Democratic Party that submitted the original motion.

We care about the issue. We have dealt with it on a continuous basis. I want to compliment the member for having laid out all of the principles of the issue itself.

There is a concern that I have in representing constituents from my riding in the Toronto area. In Ontario and specifically in Toronto an erosion of the health care system is seen. The erosion has been witnessed rather unfortunately by many of my constituents and many other citizens of both Toronto and Ontario generally in the last couple of years as the current government cuts back on the amount of expenditures and amount of commitment both in principle and in finances that it puts at the disposal of our health care system.

Perhaps part of that reason is that we are in a deep recession. I am being very kind, because statistics indicate that we are in a depression.

Economically speaking, and from a revenue side, from taxes, the population of the province of Ontario contributes annually approximately 45.7 per cent of all revenues that are drawn by this government.

Over the course of the last couple of years, because of the enormous negative impact of the recession on the economy of Ontario, we have seen a drop in manufacturing output by 13 per cent. We have seen a decrease of 23 per cent in employment in the manufacturing sector.

I do not want to talk about the other sectors just yet, but the net effect of all of that is that there has been less in terms of revenue available and there have been greater demands on the system.

How did the Government of Ontario respond? You will forgive me, I hope, for making this comment. I ask the indulgence of my colleague who has moved this amendment because I do not want to engage in a blatantly partisan debate. The fact of the matter is that what has happened is that the Government of Ontario, an NDP government, went from a surplus situation in the budget to increasing the deficit portion of its budget to \$9 billion.

One would have thought, as a citizen of that great province, as a contributor in taxation to those provincial revenues, that the \$9 billion would have been utilized in order to enhance the kind of systems that we in this House have established for all Canadians.

Medicare is one of those pillars of social stability. It is \$9 billion from 1990 until this year. It is supposed to go up to about \$11 billion. As a taxpaying constituent of that province, I look upon that government, that NDP government, that guardian, that saviour of medical social programs, and I ask, what did you do with my money?

My colleagues from the NDP in this House stand, bold faced with the hypocrisy that is unmitigated, and say to me as a constituent of the province of Ontario that the medicare program is being threatened by Liberal premiers in other provinces in Canada, knowing that in Ontario we contribute 45.7 per cent to general revenues in all of Canada, that we do have a base and we have a government in Ontario that is supposed to be the guardian of all those programs.

How can those members stand here before this House and insult the intelligence of all members by being absent when my colleague lays out all of the issues of the medicare program, or worse, impose upon this House a decision to debate—