

Borrowing Authority

within the provincial domain, than we do on national defence, for example.

Let us take medicare. Not long ago I talked to a group of doctors. They pointed out that 50 per cent of medicare payments are in respect of families with medical expenses of less than \$250 per year. There is one obvious item where we can cut down our expenditures. If a family in Canada was obliged to pay the first \$250 of any medical bill, we could cut by 50 per cent the amount of money paid to doctors under the medicare scheme. That is a very good example of how we could at least commence this process.

ed3112;-1 **Mr. Young:** Mr. Speaker, I would also like to address a question to the Hon. Member. Is he enunciating official Conservative policy when he makes that kind of statement?

Mr. Nickerson: Mr. Speaker, the Conservative Party has always been known for its responsibility in the field of Government finance. What I said today was said in the very same way by the Hon. Member for St. John's West when as Minister of Finance he brought in the Conservative budget. If the Members of the New Democratic Party want to know where we stand on financial affairs and financial responsibilities, I suggest they pull out the 1979 budget and have a look. They will see how, without causing undue difficulties to Canadians, the expenditure of revenues of the Government of Canada can in a period of years be brought into line.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, I want to direct a short question to the Hon. Member for Western Arctic regarding PIP grants. The Government has set aside \$1.5 billion in the last year to assist in frontier oil development and exploration which goes primarily to the foreign multinational oil companies, not Canadian oil companies. Does he agree with the principle of that kind of support to these kinds of companies?

• (1410)

Mr. Nickerson: No, sir, I do not support the way in which the Government of Canada has gone about the idea of PIP grants. The Hon. Members of the New Democratic Party have said many times that the solution to the oil and gas supply problems in Canada would be the nationalization of the companies engaged in that business. I certainly do not agree with that approach, as I do not agree with the approach taken by the Liberal Party.

The approach which I would like to see would not be PIP grants. I would like to see a simplified system of taxation in Canada whereby Canadians could gather themselves together to form oil and gas companies and explore for and produce oil and gas. If they were successful in a very risky undertaking, as the oil and gas business is, then they would derive profits from that venture and would be able to keep a fair amount of those profits. It would not be a confiscatory taxation system like we have today. If the taxation system was amended, then there

would be no need for PIP grants. I do not like PIP grants any more than my colleagues to my left.

Mr. Keeper: I have a supplementary question for the Member for Western Arctic. I asked the Hon. Member whether he applauded or decried the fight of the New Democratic Party for Unemployment Insurance, pensions, Family Allowances and medicare. He indicated those are provincial responsibilities, and that we really needed to spend more on national defence at this level of Government. Does the Hon. Member not realize that those are precisely the priorities and policies of Ronald Reagan, the President of the United States, the gentleman who has dragged us all into this depression today?

Mr. Nickerson: That, Mr. Speaker, is a misrepresentation of what I said. I was comparing the amount of money contained in the federal budget for national defence, for social programs and other areas. I did not advocate an increase in the national defence budget.

Mr. Young: Mr. Speaker, I still did not get an answer to the question I asked the Hon. Member for Western Arctic a few moments ago. In fact, he has been giving answers which are nearly as good as the slippery ones we get from his bed partners across the way. Is it official Tory policy that individuals in Canada would be required to pay \$250 in medical fees first before they would become eligible for medicare payments?

Mr. Nickerson: No, Mr. Speaker, that has not been adopted as the official policy of the Conservative Party of Canada, but it will be as soon as I am made Minister of National Health and Welfare.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Hon. Member for Kamloops-Shuswap on the last supplementary question.

Mr. Riis: Mr. Speaker, a quick question to my hon. friend for Western Arctic. The Hon. Member referred to his concern about unemployment which we in this Party share wholeheartedly. He also referred to the solutions of the Progressive Conservative Party back in 1979. I wonder if the Hon. Member would support the application today of the programs which the Conservative Party brought in when they were in power, and that was to terminate all of the direct job-creation projects in Canada? In other words, every single job-creation project which had been restored to this country was terminated. Is that the kind of approach to job creation he would suggest?

Mr. Nickerson: That, Mr. Speaker, is absolute nonsense. That never was the policy of this Party. It was not advocated by our Minister of Finance when he was in office. The approach which we would like to see taken is to get the economy healthy in all areas, and once you do that and once you have the citizens of Canada productively engaged, you do not need all those make-work schemes. That is the policy which we advocate in this Party.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Finance (Mr. Fisher). The time is running out.