

Adjournment Debate

● (1825)

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The hon. member for Mississauga South, who moved the motion, has sought under Standing Order 44 the right of reply and the opportunity to close the debate.

It has to be made perfectly clear to the members that no one else can speak after the member for Mississauga South if he closes the debate. Is that agreed?

Some hon. members: Agreed.

Mr. Szabo: Mr. Speaker, I would like to summarize what has been said here by members.

It is rare to find all of the speakers and all of the parties in agreement on some fundamental principle, certainly the issue of converting a tax deduction to a tax credit so that it is fair for all Canadian taxpayers. There seems to be agreement on the issue of a means test that is applicable to all of the social programs that Canada provides its citizens to ensure that the focus of the benefit is to those who are legitimately in need.

Interestingly enough, there was also some strong support for those benefits to be available for those who have chosen to provide direct parental care in the home and do not work outside the home.

We have talked about the research that has been done, some of which flies in the face of conventional and traditional wisdom. It has elevated the debate to another level, another dimension. It has accentuated the principles related to direct parental care, to the family. Direct parental care in those early years, particularly the first three to five years, has a direct correlation to the future health, social and justice issues.

We have agreed that if we invest in our children today and ensure they have the best care available, and I believe that is best done by the parents, we will in the long run save tremendously on the cost of future health care, social programs and criminal justice.

I would like to thank the hon. member for La Prairie for his generous words, the member for Lambton—Middlesex who is a very strong leader in her community and supporter of the family, the member for Port Moody—Coquitlam who spoke so very well on family matters on behalf of her party, and the member for Central Nova who has become a champion of family values in the House. I thank them all for their support of this motion and for participating in the debate.

I believe we have raised the debate to a higher level of awareness and that we in this Parliament will see legislative changes which will reward the family that chooses to put the best interest of their children ahead of their own.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The time provided for the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 96, the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

ADJOURNMENT PROCEEDINGS

[English]

A motion to adjourn the House under Standing Order 38 is deemed to have been moved.

MEDICARE

Mr. Len Taylor (The Battlefords—Meadow Lake, NDP): Mr. Speaker, on March 15 in Regina several individuals who fought to implement the first comprehensive publicly financed medical care system in North America warned Canadians that the federal government is undermining the original principles of medicare.

In particular, Allan Blakeney, the former premier of Saskatchewan, said that eliminating specific funding to the provinces in favour of reduced block transfers with few strings attached would result in a patchwork medical insurance system with different standards in different provinces.

On March 16, in question period, I asked the Prime Minister how his government could continue to claim it is defending the principles of medicare when four of the designers of the first medical care system were telling us that his reforms were going to lead to a patchwork medical care system. In response the Prime Minister said medicare would remain as it is.

● (1830)

That answer contradicts the Prime Minister's recent statements on medicare. It also flies in the face of what health care experts are telling us.

In a recent radio interview on CBC's "Morningside" the Prime Minister said medicare was never intended to pay for such things as dental care, eye glasses or ambulance services, but was created to cover the high costs of catastrophic illnesses such as major surgery.

Dr. Frank Coburn, a medicare adviser to the Saskatchewan CCF government in 1962 said: "There was no suggestion that it was only to cover catastrophic illness. It was to cover all illness that people suffer from".

The Prime Minister also argued recently that Canada should aim to reduce its health care costs from just over 10 per cent of gross domestic product to 8 per cent or 9 per cent. He claimed this would not affect the quality of health care Canadians receive. We cannot take billions of dollars from the system and