

*Supply*

We have both parties attacking medicare when they are in government and, when they are in opposition, saying positive things about the health care system and the need for further support.

I want to ask the member two questions. In terms of determinants of health care, we are well aware that lower income Canadians are much more subject to problems with their health than those Canadians who are better off. Their problems with nutrition, problems with housing, and problems with lower levels of education illustrate themselves in a much greater use of the health care system and much more morbidity in that community.

I want to ask the member one very simple question. If he is so concerned about the health care system, why is it that his government has chosen to attack social programs across this country, putting more and more people into more difficulties with poverty, attacking the very poorest of our society? Why is he doing that if he is so interested in ensuring that the health care system survives?

I want to ask him one last question. I would like to ask him who he thinks said the following in 1983: "The problem with medicare arose because the federal government reneged on commitments it made to the provinces and cut back very drastically on the dollars it sent to the provinces who are charged with administering and paying for medicare. The problem has arisen because of unilateral arbitrary cutback by the federal government to the provinces who are charged with footing the bill. That is the problem".

I will put the member out of his suspense. That was the present Prime Minister who said that and now, while he is in government, he is of course making exactly those same cuts that he criticized. I wonder if the member might want to comment on the question that I raised.

**Mr. McCreath:** Mr. Speaker, I thank my hon. friend for his contribution to the debate. Indeed I will attempt to respond to his question as best I can.

I think his good friend, the premier of Ontario, is going to find out a little bit about the realities of being in government as opposed to the realities of being in opposition; being in opposition where one can do, as my hon. friend does and say: "Spend more, spend more, spend more. Don't worry about who is going to pay the piper at the end of the day".

The reality of the situation is that it is not that simple. I would remind my hon. friend that we are not going to be able to have any social programs at all in this country if we do not get the finances of the nation under control.

My hon. friend uses the example of the recent budget in Newfoundland to illustrate his point. Perhaps I might be permitted to quote the premier of Newfoundland himself who he will admit, I am sure, is a most definitive source. Mr. Wells' comment on the federal government was, and I quote from the news report:

I am kind of relieved, I would say. It will not cause us to make significant changes to our own budget.

He went on to say that that documents was expected next week. Mr. Wells does not share my hon. friend's view that the federal government's budget is going to interfere.

There is no question that they may have some problem in the financing of the Government of Newfoundland. I know that in our own province all Nova Scotian taxpayers including myself await with trepidation the provincial budget that is going to come down there. They forecast a \$30 million deficit this year and, as of four months ago, they had it up to a \$150 million deficit. I have some concerns about that.

However the bottom line is—and this is what my hon. friends in the New Democratic Party seem to forget sometimes—that at some point in the process we have to pay the bills.

I was raised—and maybe it is an old value—to know you have got to cut the cloth according to the pattern. I was brought up to believe that you have to pay your bills, that you just cannot endlessly borrow money and let the thing go and go and go until you have bankrupted the next generation who are left with it.

As I said in my remarks—and I know with assurance that my hon. friend listened very, very carefully to them—the best support for a health care system, as for other programs that Canadians want and value, is a sound basis for the economy of the government as well as for the economy of the nation. That is the strongest basis upon which we can support our health care system.

Unfortunately my hon. friends opposite may not share that view. They have credit cards that evidently do not have bills sent back to them at the end of the month. They have credit cards that evidently do not accrue