

Government Orders

It is important to note that the government has not touched equalization. Transfers under this program to the less wealthy provinces have been exempted from the budget expenditure controls. Even with the measures proposed in the budget, growth in federal transfers is expected to run at 3.7 per cent annually between 1991-92 and 1995-96. That will be more than the rate of inflation during that period of time if our goals are reached and we believe they will be reached. This is in contrast to three per cent for all federal programs over the same period.

Bill C-20 brings the growth of federal-provincial transfers into line with these current fiscal realities which are much different than they were in the 1960s and the 1970s when our major transfer programs took their present form. Times change. The economy changes and situations change. The federal government has already announced and has started consultations with the provinces and Canadians generally on the reform of the major transfer system. The provinces have requested this. They want to assure funding as well. They are concerned about the system and we want to take a major look at that system. It has been guided by the principles that the new transfer system must be affordable.

It must protect provinces with lesser financial means. It must maintain the vital national public services expected by Canadians while providing accountability to the public.

The fearmongering that has been going on this morning by the New Democratic Party I think is totally unfair and unfounded. There has been screaming and moaning and groaning about our medicare system and how those nasty Tories want to do away with it. What utter nonsense. What poppycock. What socialist baloney. That is absolute nonsense. We have as much concern about the medicare system as anyone does.

An hon. member: We want to bring it into the 21st century.

Mr. McDermid: That is exactly what we want to do. We want to assure that services are provided and that they are affordable. That is what it is all about.

For the New Democratic Party to say that this government is not concerned about medicare is totally false. It is absolutely totally false.

An hon. member: Why are you destroying it?

Mr. McDermid: They were standing up not too long ago blaming the provinces for not spending the money on medicare that they get from the federal government.

That says to me that the federal government is giving the money and the provinces are not spending it on medicare. You cannot have it both ways. You cannot say that we are destroying the medicare system when the provinces are not spending the money they get for medicare on medicare. You cannot have it both ways over there. You just cannot do it. I will not buy the nonsense which is handed out to the Canadian public because it is just not true and the hon. member knows it.

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. During Question Period today the Speaker took a member of the Liberal Party severely to task for suggesting that something the minister had said was baloney.

This minister has just used precisely the same phrase with reference to comments which my hon. friend from Vancouver has stated. I would ask you, Mr. Speaker, to ask the minister to withdraw the comment in consistency with the normal parliamentary language which the Speaker has laid out during Question Period today.

Mr. McDermid: I am going to continue with my speech. I was talking about socialist baloney. I did not accuse any individual member of it. I talked about socialist baloney. There is nothing wrong with it.

Mr. Langdon: Mr. Speaker, I rise on the same point of order. I am quite prepared to have a vigorous debate with the minister about the values of this particular piece of legislation.

I have asked you for a ruling on it. It does seem to me that if a word is inadmissible according to the Speaker when it comes from the opposition surely that same word when it comes from the government is also inadmissible.

[*Translation*]

The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois): I believe that when the Speaker intervened earlier during today's sitting, it was to remind a member who apparently had interrupted several times. It was because of his behaviour, not because of the term he used, that the Speaker called the