

Yes, there are pressures from time to time in different areas. However, the Canada Health Act ensures that these pressures are addressed by the individual provinces. When we see long waiting lists, provinces move in very quickly and public opinion forces them into doing what is right, ensuring that the needs of their citizens are met in a good manner without people having to pay to get to the head of the line.

Mr. Grant Hill (MacLeod, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, reasonable access is not the only Canada Health Act pillar that has crumbled. Let us look at the minister's arbitrary definition of user fees.

The minister says Alberta allows user fees; naughty, naughty, naughty. However at the Eastern Kings Memorial Hospital in Nova Scotia patients must pay for stitches, anaesthetic and syringes. Does the minister responsible for this arbitrary legislation not agree that patients having to pay for these things makes it a user fee?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the letter which I sent to all provinces interpreting the Canada Health Act and user fees applied to all provinces in this country. That is the way we implement federal legislation. Medical necessity has been defined by medical associations, provincial governments and in some cases the courts.

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• (1435)

[Translation]

CANADIAN BROADCASTING CORPORATION

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

We now know that the minister, who had announced himself, with great fanfare, Mr. Manera's appointment at the helm of the CBC last year, was not even consulted by the Prime Minister before the appointment of the new president of the CBC, Perrin Beatty, was announced.

In light of the fact that he was totally excluded by the Prime Minister from the decision-making process regarding the appointment of Perrin Beatty as the new president of the CBC, will the Minister of Canadian Heritage acknowledge that this was a sign that the Prime Minister and the federal Cabinet have lost confidence in him?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, the hon. member's statement is unfounded, completely unfounded. I raised the issue with the minister first, before bringing it to Cabinet. I think this was more than a month before Mr. Beatty's appointment.

I think that the hon. member's information—Long before the budget was tabled, Mr. Manera had asked to be replaced for

personal reasons. He called us weeks before the budget was tabled to say that he wanted to leave for reasons of his own and that his resignation had nothing to do with the budget. He actually handed in his resignation before the budget was even tabled.

Mrs. Christiane Gagnon (Québec, BQ): Mr. Speaker, my supplementary is for the Minister of Canadian Heritage.

Are we to understand from the Prime Minister's answer that the heritage minister's inability to meet his obligations to the CBC is what led him to abdicate his duties as the minister responsible for this major Crown corporation?

Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I understand the hon. member's problem. Her supplementary was prepared before I gave my first answer.

I said previously and I repeat that Mr. Manera resigned long before the budget was tabled. I mentioned Mr. Beatty's name for the first time weeks before his appointment was made public.

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[English]

HEALTH CARE

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, once and for all I want to end this fallacy. We in the Reform Party in no way, shape or form are in favour of an American style health care system. We will fight against it every time.

The Canada Health Act faces a grim future. It is supposed to guarantee reasonable access yet in British Columbia a person in severe pain has to wait 13 months for a hip transplant.

Will the Minister of Health review the act to provide a working definition of reasonable access?

Hon. Diane Marleau (Minister of Health, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I am quite pleased to hear that the hon. member is in favour of medicare as we have it in Canada. I suggest though that he speak with other members of his party who do not appear to share his views.

We will continue to insist that the Canada Health Act remain in place. It has served the people of Canada very well. It will continue to do so despite the protestations of the people from the third party who have absolutely no understanding of what it is like to be ill and not have the money to be treated. We refuse to allow our system to go back to that kind of inequity.

Mr. Keith Martin (Esquimalt—Juan de Fuca, Ref.): Mr. Speaker, the minister cannot tell me, an emergency room physician, that I do not know what is happening to sick people in this country.