

*The Budget*

American system where health care is a commodity, the best that money can buy.

It is ironic that while Americans are demanding a health care system like we have in Canada, we are making the choice to have a health care system like they have. We all know the problems that that will create, the numbers of people who are inadequately or not covered by the system and the fact that the rich have private hospitals with luxurious suites while the poor are denied basic health care. That is the direction we are moving in. Americans want our system. Our government is rejecting that system for one which is so flawed.

What is the minister's expertise to determine that people do not get as sick in Nova Scotia as they do in Alberta? Why is he encouraging the privatization of medical care, the creation of two health care systems; one for the rich and one for the poor.

We have already seen from Alberta suggestions that this is the direction in which the health care system should move. We have heard all sorts of pronouncements from the government, both with regard to health care and post-secondary education, about how important they are to the country and about how committed this government is to those two programs.

Actions speak louder than words. When we look at who is going to pay for the government's philosophy, when we look at what the government actually does in pursuing its big business, free enterprise, anti-Canadian policy, we can see who pays the cost.

There are cuts and shifts out the national AIDS program which will make it more difficult for us to fight the war on AIDS which this government has said is such a priority. Twelve million dollars is taken out of that strategy and moved to other places. Support groups in favour of improving health services and looking into research and education in public health lose out by \$900,000. Support groups which are advocating health promotion lose out by \$150,000. The national health surveillance program which attempts to ensure that Canadians are protected from health hazards and ensures that our health standards are adequate is cut by \$12 million. Programs for vocational rehabilitation of disabled persons, one of the most vulnerable groups we have in our society, are cut by \$15 million. Support

services for welfare recipients, again a group which is severely disadvantaged in our society, have cuts of \$2 million. Cuts in programs to address child care problems and to encourage the increase in quality of child care cut by \$2 million. Cuts to programs to assist seniors in supporting themselves and in leading a dignified and happy life by \$3.5 million.

The legitimate role of the federal government has been traditionally to help the most vulnerable in our society, the less well off. If, as the Conservatives believe, that there is no longer a role for government in this respect, if, as they can attack the poor, the disabled, the sick and the old, who is going to play this role? Is the private sector going to do this for us? That is what the government seems to be suggesting. Is it going to conduct research into AIDS, is it going to assist those people living with disabilities, is it going to investigate aspects of seniors' health care, is it going to help seniors live in their own homes with some dignity and with some happiness? Is big business going to support the support groups which want to investigate measures which can assist in our health care program?

Clearly it is not. So what this government is doing is attacking those very programs and those very groups which can assist us in making our society a better place. The government is saying, if you are sick in Newfoundland, you do not deserve the same high quality of health care as better off Canadians do. It is saying that if you are a student in Saskatchewan you are not entitled to the same high quality university education as you are in rich provinces. The government is saying that health promotion, the fight against AIDS, the disabled, battered women, children, seniors, those on welfare are no longer priorities of this government.

I think we have to assess the philosophy of this government and look carefully at what this government is doing. If we look at the budget we see that there was nothing on the environment. Such a short period of time ago the government was professing great commitment to the environment and to an economic program which paid attention to environmental concerns. Yet as soon as the first budget comes along, after these pronouncements, we see nothing in the budget at all for the environment. We see nothing to address the crisis in Atlantic Canada, a crisis which is going to affect tens of thousands of