

*Supply*

I had hoped that it would have mentioned that health costs are increasing at alarming rates and tried to understand why that is so. I had hoped that it would have recognized that we need a different kind of response to health care problems today if we are going to respond to the health of Canadians.

What might some of these be? I go to some former debates. I recognize again the contribution and the leadership that my colleague from Winnipeg North has given. I want to quote from that particular opposition day dedicated to health care by the Liberal Party of Canada, on March 19, 1991. He said: "Daily our health care system is becoming more taxed and stricken with debt and fiscal restraint". He points out that the purchase of new equipment, even the maintenance of old equipment, becomes extremely difficult to fund. He points out as well that research funding has been cut. He goes on to say: "I believe by not focusing more attention on prevention we cannot hope to maintain services while coping with burgeoning health costs".

He points out some other difficulties: "I believe by not focusing more attention on the prevention we cannot hope to maintain services". He also says that we have to become more creative in responding to the needs that are out there. He points out as well that it is becoming increasingly difficult to find qualified nurses and qualified doctors, and this is particularly so in smaller, more isolated areas, and for a certain particular population, very often those which have particularly unique problems that have to be dealt with in the health care area.

My colleague also has identified the need for treatment facilities for new diseases and for the elderly. "Care centres for the elderly are desperately needed as their numbers swell with the addition of the baby boom generation".

Here are some of the points that my colleague has made, that other colleagues as well have identified, ones we need to come to grips with. We have fewer dollars being transferred to provinces. We have a changing demography in this country; people living longer, wanting more health care and better care.

Because of these various factors, the situation is changing.

*[Translation]*

When things change it is often extremely difficult for this government or any other to deal with the changed situation.

• (1240)

People often try to find targets and criticize instead of proposing creative solutions. That is what bothers me today. I am very troubled that such an important issue for all Canadians was used for political purposes, knowing that if we had chosen to discuss and talk things over together in order to find solutions we might have been able to do something good for our people.

*[English]*

A more appropriate motion might have been to collectively discuss, in an open kind of way, what kinds of solutions we could find to maintain and hopefully improve the health system for the benefit of Canadians. I would hope that perhaps during the rest of the day, in the time that is left, that is exactly what we would do.

*[Translation]*

I would like to recapitulate very briefly, since I am getting to the end of my speech. It is unfortunate that today and on many other occasions important issues are exploited for political purposes, for purely political gain.

I realize it is only human to want to put your best foot forward and try and woo Canadian voters. I think it is quite acceptable in certain situations, but I think we should be sensible and realize that there are times when it is appropriate to try and play certain political games, and times when we must consider the major issues of the day and try to find solutions that will help Canadians and help our country come up with programs that will provide a more satisfactory response to the needs of Canadians.

*[English]*

Therefore, I would like to come to the end of this particular discussion by asking my colleagues to commit themselves for the rest of the day to looking at solutions to these problems. There are fewer dollars; there are changing demographics; there are changing attitudes of the people who want better and more significant care. All of this is there and there are many, many more issues as well. Surely it would be a much more productive day if at the end of it all we could say: "Here is an idea, here are two or three ideas that might do something significant in terms of responding to the health care needs of