

wants no part in it. We will not tolerate direct charges to patients for medically necessary care.

During this period of constraint creative processes are being produced by creative individuals in every province in handling these fiscal problems. There are solutions and money can be managed much more effectively than it is at the present time.

One of the most cherished services enjoyed by Canadians is the health care system. Health care issues constantly rank as number one across a variety of polls. The federal government is the ultimate torch bearer of the one of the last truly national programs. The central government, therefore, is morally obliged to defend the Canada Health Act against policies that seek to destroy it.

I believe as do many Canadians that the Canada Health Act should be kept as it is. Undoubtedly any changes to the fundamental principles upon which health insurance is founded would cripple the most notable gains attained by the Canadian health care system.

We need only look south of the border to realize how fortunate we are to enjoy the health services we do. In the United States approximately 35 million people are without adequate health coverage. Health care horror stories abound south of the 49th parallel. Even Americans who have medical insurance can be hit by very high medical bills. In some cases, because of poor family coverage, if a family member has a serious illness or an accident the extra bills can be financially devastating. Moreover American company medical insurance plans lock many Americans into their jobs. This is because once a person develops a chronic illness no other insurance company will provide insurance at reasonably affordable rates.

• (1205)

Certainly wealthy Americans can receive the finest possible health care. However this is certainly not the case for the middle and lower socioeconomic classes. It is interesting that the opposition in the House is advocating a very similar system to that of the Americans.

Some detractors of our health care system indicate that we can no longer afford medicare in its present form as a result of our fiscal situation. However most health economists agree that it is not our medicare policy in and of itself we can no longer afford, but the inefficiencies in the manner in which medicare is implemented and delivered.

Significant improvements could be made in a number of areas without compromising national standards. For example, the unbridled growth of unproven and costly new medical technology has ballooned health care costs without any apparent return on the money spent. Another problem pertains to the manner in which drug prices have skyrocketed over the recent past. As well

it appears supply and distribution of our medical manpower need improvement.

These are but a few of the areas where efficiencies, if introduced, could reduce the cost of delivering health care in Canada. Above all, provinces must listen to those who deliver and maintain health care services as well as those who receive the services. Although some problems exist we must do what we can to improve the system without destroying it. In a nutshell, the difficulties facing our health care system are the result of unlimited demands upon a limited pool of resources.

I feel compelled to rise today before the House to speak against a motion that would ultimately lead to the dismantling of the health care system that is dear to the hearts of many Canadians. In sum, Canadians demand and expect direction from the federal government for the preservation of our most sacred national program. The government has a moral right and the legal authority to ensure that this is the case. That is why we must vote against the motion before us today.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Kilger): The time provided the consideration of Private Members' Business has now expired. Pursuant to Standing Order 96, the order is dropped from the Order Paper.

GOVERNMENT ORDERS

[Translation]

CN COMMERCIALIZATION ACT

On the Order:

May 5, 1995—The Minister of Transport—Second reading and referral to the Standing Committee on Transport of Bill C-89, an act to provide for the continuance of the Canadian National Railway Company under the Canada Business Corporations Act and for the issuance and sale of shares of the Company to the public.

Hon. Douglas Young (Minister of Transport, Lib.): Mr. Speaker, I move:

That Bill C-89, an act to provide for the continuance of the Canadian National Railway Company under the Canada Business Corporations Act and for the issuance and sale of shares of the Company to the public, be referred immediately to the Standing Committee on Transport.

[English]

I am pleased to open debate on Bill C-89, an act to commercialize the Canadian National Railway.

This is an historic occasion, one that marks a very clear turning point in the history of transportation in Canada. In 1923 the federal government completed the amalgamation and takeover of five privately run railways: the Grand Trunk, the Grand Trunk Pacific, Canadian Northern, the Transcontinental and the