

Supply

a renewed federation. In conclusion, I would say that when all the members of this federal Parliament understand this fundamental issue, we can look to a better future, and present, for our children, as well as for the Quebec and the Canadian people.

[English]

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, I just have two quick questions for the hon. member. I would like to give him another chance to try and answer the very easy question from the member from Winnipeg. Yes or no, does he support user fees?

The second point follows from his comments where he said that the funds should be used more effectively, an argument that I can support. I would like to ask his views on whether he would support new measures which would ensure that those funds which are transferred from the federal government to the provinces that are supposed to be spent on health and post-secondary education are, indeed, spent on health and post-secondary education?

The member may know that, at least in my province, there are many allegations the Government of British Columbia takes federal money designated for health and education and spends it on paving highways. I would like to know the member's views on that matter as well.

[Translation]

Mr. Denis Pronovost (Saint-Maurice): Mr. Speaker, in reply to the first part of the questions, I would say we must, first, maintain the universality of the medicare system in Canada. We will allow provincial governments and the federal government to review the conditions because we cannot be trapped or locked in a system that is fifteen or twenty years old. That is what counts. We must consider all the options, but retaining at the same time our national system.

On the second point, I would say I agree with the member of the New Democratic Party. Mr. Speaker, as far as I am concerned, I am not at all convinced that all provincial governments really use the transfer payments or for that matter the health care transfer payments for that purpose.

My colleague talked about British Columbia. We could easily say the same thing about Quebec. I am not convinced, Mr. Speaker, that the Quebec government uses the money we transfer each year for health care. And we have a very tangible example of that in Quebec with the tax on gas. That money is intended in part for road repairs, but what we see in reality is that only 35 per cent of it is used for the purpose it was established for initially.

As for user fees, *frais modérateurs* as they are called in Québec, one thing remains: they are not at the heart of the matter. The issue is not user fees. The question is not whether you're going to charge \$3 or \$5 or what have you every time someone shows up at the hospital's emergency department in Shawinigan-Sud or Grand-Mère.

That is not the way we are going to solve health care problems in Canada. It is not by charging a tax here and a tax there in an effort to discourage users that the problems are going to be solved. What we must do—I will say it one last time in conclusion—is to review the way we spend the money, which is up to \$60 billion every year. That is the main problem we have in Canada as far as health care is concerned: we must review the whole process and find more efficient ways to do it, Mr. Speaker. Other countries have done it, and Canada has the resources to do the same.

[English]

Mr. Brian L. Gardiner (Prince George—Bulkley Valley): Mr. Speaker, thank you very much for this opportunity to speak on this very important motion which has been introduced by my colleague from Winnipeg, and has been amended today by the New Democratic member from Surrey.

From the debate earlier on, there were some serious questions, I suppose from all sides of this House, concerning exactly what was the intent of the member from Winnipeg in bringing this motion forward. Some questions were raised by the minister of health regarding whether this is in fact a question of confidence in the government. The member wanted to know if the vote would mean that if the government supported the motion it would have to resign and call an election. Well, I don't think that would be such a bad idea, in any case,