

illegality. That is why by our vote of February 19 last, we have sought to force the government to show its hand.

Mr. Chairman, since I will not have enough time to conclude my remarks may I call it ten o'clock?

[English]

The Assistant Deputy Chairman: Order. It being ten o'clock, shall I rise, report progress and ask leave to sit again at the next sitting of the house?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Progress reported.

● (10:00 p.m.)

BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE

Mr. Starr: Does the government house leader want to tell us what we will take up tomorrow?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, tomorrow we will continue with the tax resolution.

PROCEEDINGS ON ADJOURNMENT MOTION

A motion to adjourn the house under provisional standing order 39A deemed to have been moved.

NORTHERN AFFAIRS—REDUCTION IN BUDGET FOR NORTHERN HEALTH SERVICES

Hon. W. G. Dinsdale (Brandon-Souris): Mr. Speaker, earlier this evening we were amazed by the meanderings and confusion of the government's fiscal and economic policies, and I wish to seize this opportunity to bring to the attention of the house something that will add to the general feeling of confusion already expressed. This is a report taken from a recent issue of *News of the North*, stating that there has been a drastic cutback in the finances provided for the care of the residents of northern Canada, particularly in the Northwest Territories, which reduction will principally effect the Indians and Eskimos in that part of Canada.

The report was based on information supplied by Dr. Gordon Butler, chief of the northern health services division, outlining how deep the slashes were that were made. Dr. Butler indicated that he was a quarter of a million dollars short in the funds required even to pay salaries, and the austerity measures of the federal government would make it impossible for his department to maintain

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present health services, and still less could it increase the services.

This report was picked up by the *Winnipeg Free Press* which dealt with it in this fashion in an editorial on March 2:

There have been, so far, no demonstrations against the recent cuts in the money available to the field officers of the northern health service of the Department of National Health and Welfare. Who's to miss that \$104,000 C.B.C. employees and bad management spent on unused rooms for Expo? The northern health service officers. But of course they would merely handle the money to provide health services for Indians and Eskimos of the north country. And their budget has just been cut.

I think this is the place and the time to bring attention to this problem. We are all aware that there is a real health problem in the territories. As I said earlier today during the question period, the infant mortality rate is astronomically high, being four times the rate in other parts of Canada. It is even greater than the rate in some of the so-called underdeveloped countries of the world. The anticipated life span of our Eskimo population is 20.9 years compared with the average life span of 35 years in countries like India.

At a time when the government is boasting of a breakthrough in medicare and universal health care for all the people of Canada, I think we should take pause because obviously our priorities are all askew. It is little wonder that the people of Canada have decreasing confidence in a government which, in such an inexplicable way, places emphasis on false priorities.

My time is limited, but I should like to ask whoever will be speaking for the government tonight if the tragic gap in health care that is represented by this misplaced economy on the part of the government will be made good by the provision of medicare to the Yukon and Northwest Territories. If not, I think the government deserves censure from this house and from the people of Canada.

Mrs. Margaret Rideout (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, while replying to the remarks of the hon. gentleman I should like to put a few facts on the record. There are 28 treatment institutions strategically located throughout the Northwest Territories. All will continue to be operated throughout the coming year and a number of health centres, health stations and dispensers will also continue to provide services. After the recent accelerated expansion of medical and public health services, including the introduction of total hospital insurance coverage and the