

*Supply*

a recent article: "As a result of actions by the New Democratic Party, the New Democratic Government of Ontario, the Ontario Hospital Association has issued serious warnings; lay-offs of up to 13,000 hospital employees and 3,600 bed closures in hospitals". How do you like that? That is one of the actions.

Here is another article: "Hospitals will have to close and they will have to lay off staff". This is a New Democratic failure to preserve the medicare system.

I will quote another article about the behaviour of the New Democratic government in Ontario: "2,000 Ontario Hospital Jobs at Risk. The 1 per cent funding increase for Ontario hospitals this year could bring the loss of 2,000 hospital jobs across the province, said the finance minister".

Another article describes the situation of two individuals who are suffering from schizophrenia. One is able to get a drug that permits that person to cope with that particular difficulty, while the other does not. Why? The New Democratic government of Ontario will not provide the necessary kind of assistance.

I quote these particular articles because we need to acknowledge that all governments are having difficulties. It is inappropriate, insensitive and blatantly political to pick on a few individuals to try to make political hay out of an issue that is of such great importance to all Canadians. As I indicated, it trivializes it, it debases it.

[*Translation*]

Frankly it is disgusting and Canadians will see it that way.

[*English*]

What kinds of attitudes should we be taking on this issue? Let me quote my colleague from Winnipeg North who said on March 19, 1991, on an opposition day by this party dedicated to this topic: "Mr. Speaker, yesterday I sat in the House in amazement listening to a partisan New Democrat painting his party as a champion of medicare. His holier than thou rhetoric failed to mention that all first ministers of all political stripes and the Prime Minister agreed to discuss user fees at their meeting last night". This is not the first time that they have tried to do this.

Why? Obviously they have been looking at the polls. Obviously they are more concerned about the popularity

of the Liberal Party of Canada than they are about the issue of medicare, about health care for Canadians.

I have another one here: "Medicare belongs to all of us, to all Canadians. It is shared by every member of this House and all of their constituents. Medicare is no less prized in Winnipeg North than it is in Kelowna, British Columbia, or Port aux Basques, Newfoundland. Medicare is the undeniable right of every Canadian citizen. It belongs to my sons and their children to follow. It belongs to the children of the Minister of National Health and Welfare and his colleagues and their children. It is perhaps the most precious thing all Canadians have to pass on to the next generation".

That is what my colleague from Winnipeg North said. He goes on: "Medicare is not a partisan issue and ought not to be". That is the kind of attitude we need. That is the kind of leadership that we need if we are going to come to grips with this critically important issue to all Canadians.

Using an issue such as health care, picking on certain premiers because of their political party membership, while premiers of other political parties have done the same or more, is political pettiness, political smallness at its worse. I expected much more from the NDP. I am sorry that we have had to stoop to that particular level.

I would have wanted the truth. Why is the current health system having difficulties? Clearly there are cuts to health care. Between 1986 and 1995 there will have been 20 billion fewer dollars transferred to provinces. Obviously, that is a lot of money and it is difficult to accommodate to those kinds of changes. Let there be no doubt about it. That is a major problem.

There was the made-in-Canada recession. This recession has caused a lot of difficulties in health care, in education and in other social programs. There are people who want more and better care. That is a change in attitude that has taken on some significant importance.

I had hoped that the NDP would have mentioned that one of the problems—I am delighted and I hope I am one of the individuals who will enjoy this—is that Canadians are living longer. They live longer and therefore they need more health care for longer periods of time.