

### Health Care

Islands. Other countries in the world are ahead of us in this field and there is no reason why they should be. We are now at the stage in our social development where the proper health care of all Canadians is a social necessity. It is a priority under our way of life. We cannot turn the clock back to the so-called glorious days of laissez-faire, because we know that even under our system substantial numbers of Canadians, this day, this hour, are left with inadequate care. One thinks of the permanently handicapped and of those, as the mover of the motion mentioned, who day after day must take costly drugs in order to maintain a viable standard of health.

We are all concerned about the tremendous increases in costs which have occurred in the last few years in this field, and we know that the provinces are bearing a tremendous burden in this field. Again, I agree with the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands. It is outrageous to suggest that the provinces are playing fast and loose with these funds and that they cannot be trusted. That is an outrageous suggestion. If the federal government cannot come up with something more realistic and generous than the complicated program thrown at the provinces the other day, it had better stick to the 50-50 formula. It is far better to stick with that than bring forward the kind of suggestion under which the government might do something in the 1980's to alleviate the situation.

I suppose the only element that could be more ironic than underpinning alcohol and tobacco would be designating the year 1984 as the year when action will be taken.

**Mr. Stanfield:** Tax sharing might be significant by that year.

**Mr. Macquarrie:** In the short time at my disposal, and I never like to speak beyond my time, may I say that in my view it is incumbent on the minister and the government, instead of sitting back now in a sulk, to negotiate seriously with the provinces; to start all over again, if necessary, to confess that they have been too rigid, too arrogant, too haughty, and to find a way whereby the federal government may maintain its traditional and proper role in ensuring minimal standards of health care across this country. At the same time, it must provide to the provinces sufficient resources to enable them to develop their own health systems which are geared to their own particular needs. It must give the provinces the administrative elbow room to develop within their own jurisdictions their own health systems so that they can obtain the maximum value for every dollar spent by either or both jurisdictions. We have had too much bureaucratic rigidity, too much of the take it or leave it attitude, too much of, "adopt our view, or go back to your provincial capitals".

I believe that if our government were to display sufficient sensitivity in this area, it would adopt certain priorities. I will name them in my limited time. First, the government should ensure that all Canadians get value for those tax dollars which go to meeting health care costs. We must take these things seriously. Second, it should ensure that each province has a fair and equitable share of tax revenues, either under the tax points system or under some other system, so that the provinces can meet their responsibilities for current health care programs and for

[Mr. Macquarrie.]

those programs which are needed to meet particular conditions within each province. Third, it should ensure what the present plan certainly does not ensure, that provision is made for the relative growth in revenues. These would have to be viewed realistically. Fourth, a sensitive, thoughtful and preceptive federal government would, of course, preserve its own power to use the fiscal system in order to maintain economic stabilization. It will also, and here I echo the Rowell-Sirois Commission whose chief prophet today is the hon. member for Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands, ensure the preservation of the principles of universality, comprehensiveness, accessibility and portability. These principles must be maintained.

Where we are most deficient, it seems to me, is in the lack of reasonable flexibility. When the late Prime Minister Pearson was in the House, he often talked about co-operative federalism. You do not hear that expression so much now and I do not think one sees it practised so much now, either. The federal system, as any historian or political scientist will tell you, is an extremely difficult one to operate. You cannot operate it by ultimata or by dicta. You can only operate it by continuous concession, constant compromise and eternal good will; declarations such as, "This is the last sweetener we are going to put into the kitty, take it or leave it", are recipes for the destruction of federalism. Federalism can crack on matters of social and economic concern as well as on deep political and emotional issues. Here, again, I find myself in accord with the mover of this motion. This is a matter of great importance. This is probably the biggest challenge the minister has faced and, so far, he has failed.

**An hon. Member:** Ha!

**Mr. Macquarrie:** If the sudden departure of the representatives of the provinces to their capitals is not a sign of failure, I do not know what more dynamic or dramatic indication one would want. I trust that the Liberal backbencher who laughed at my assertion a moment ago will take this seriously. I think the apparent lack of concern shown by the government has created a major crack in the whole structure of Canadian federalism. I hope, when this matter is taken up again by the first ministers, that we will see a bit more concern, a bit less callousness, more consideration and less inflexibility; otherwise not only our national health plan but our federal structure may be greatly endangered.

● (1430)

[Translation]

**Mr. C. A. Gauthier (Roberval):** Mr. Speaker, I should not like to miss this chance of saying a few words on the New Democratic Party's motion that reads as follows:

That this House disapproves the Government's proposal to retreat by stages from the present cost-sharing arrangements with respect to hospital and medical care programs and calls upon the Government to fund all health services on a 50-50 basis and to expand the Health Resources Fund to enable the Provincial Governments to improve their health services.

Mr. Speaker, I cannot give my wholehearted approval to this motion for the good reason that I see from reading it that it is the product of a socialist mind. I am not one bit socialist myself, but a democrat and where the provinces are concerned, I am for independence, which is why I