

committed to it today as when it was brought in so many years ago.

What is going to happen if our country splits up? I hope our country does not split up, and I am doing everything I can to ensure that it does not. I am glad to see that the majority of people in this House do not want to see our country split up. We have representatives on both sides of the House, and there is only a very small minority who want to see a different arrangement of Canada than the Confederation that we now have.

I am still an optimist about our country. I still have faith that we will continue to be the dominion of Canada from sea to sea and that the health system we have grown accustomed to and which the whole population expects to be delivered by our senior levels of government will continue to be so.

One thing that is not widely known or understood is that when the federal government reduces any of its payments in the Established Programs Financing, there are tax credits which are given to the provinces so that they can pick up the slack. The amount of dollars that the province will have to use will still be the same amount.

Many people say that we are cutting down on medicare. Nonetheless, we have frozen the dollars on the EPF—

**The Acting Speaker (Mr. DeBlois):** Order, please. I want to recognize another member who wants a question or comment.

**Mr. Maurizio Bevilacqua (York North):** Mr. Speaker, I would like to congratulate the member for his speech.

There is a report published today which states: "One in four report lengthy delays in health care." It goes on to state, for example, that of the 25 per cent who reported problems getting treatment; 12 per cent waited longer than four weeks.

I for one understand the fact that it is not necessarily always a question of funding or more money towards programs. Sometimes it is a question of efficiency.

I was just wondering if the member can tell us what ways or means he has in mind to increase the efficiency of our health care system.

### *Supply*

**Mr. Belsher:** Mr. Speaker, the hon. member raises a very good question. I am not sure sufficient work is being done on how we might improve the system. Have we really gone out and brought to bear all of the minds that are in our health care system to see how they can improve it?

I know that when a patient goes in to see his doctor for a check-up, the doctor has a little check off pad for the various tests he wants. He can check every one off. Whether all are necessary or not, I do not know, I am not a medical doctor. But really, is anybody looking over his shoulder to see how many of those tests were necessary for the general health of that patient?

I am sure there are many, many cases across our country, from coast to coast, of things being performed that are not necessary for the health and well-being of the patient.

**Mr. Gilbert Parent (Welland—St. Catharines—Thorold):** Mr. Speaker, the Minister of Finance announced in last month's budget that the freeze on the EPF, that is the Established Programs Financing, would extend to the fiscal year 1994-1995. As all members in the House know, these entitlements cover payments to the provinces for health and post-secondary education.

I am the critic for youth for the Liberal Party and as such I want to mention of how these cuts in medicare are going to affect the young people of our country.

Some years ago the Liberal Party put its caring stamp, as I call it, on the nation by bring in the universality of social programs. The minister of external affairs who was here today, mentioned Lester B. Pearson in his speech a few days ago, when he was talking about the peace process in the gulf. Well, Lester B. Pearson—I call him the man of peace—whose work did lead to a Nobel Peace Prize, brought us medicare and the Canada Assistance Plan as well as bringing us great renown because of his work for peace.

The programs he brought in followed those which were brought in by Mr. Mackenzie King; old age pensions; family allowances and unemployment insurance.

The viability of these programs is now in jeopardy, due to a succession of brutal budget cuts by the Mulroney administration. We generally tend to think of medicare as a program for older Canadians. But as I look at the frightening statistics and the ravages of AIDS on our