

Adjournment Debate

billing is occurring. This reduction in federal contributions serves as a disincentive to the practice of extra billing.

The Canada Health Act defines extra billing as charges to a patient for an insured health service in an amount that exceeds the provincial health plan payment. The act requires the cash health transfer payment to the province to be reduced by an amount equal to the amount of the extra billing occurring in the province. In other words, for each dollar of extra billing a dollar is deducted. However we must be sure before we decide to withhold any transfer funds.

The minister is very concerned about the possibility of some British Columbia physicians charging extra fees for insured services. Such fees would leave patients having to pay out of their own pockets when they have already paid for health care services through their taxes.

The fees would also represent a financial barrier to

some patients seeking or receiving needed medical care. This is something that goes against the principles upon which our health care system is based.

In conclusion, this government is opposed strongly to extra billing in principle and in practice. The minister is prepared to use his authority under the Canada Health Act and respond accordingly if any legitimate threat in the form of extra billing occurs.

That investigation to assure the hon. member is currently in process and it is the intent of the minister to deal with it in the way he sees fit in the event the member's claims are found to be true.

The Acting Speaker (Mr. Paproski): The motion to adjourn the House is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly this House stands adjourned until tomorrow at ten o'clock a.m. pursuant to Standing Order 24(1).

The House adjourned at 5.21 p.m.