

December 10, 2002  
House of Commons  
Question Period

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**Ms. Alexa McDonough (Halifax, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Prime Minister. Since Romanow tabled his recommendations, the government has been characterizing his report as just one among many. The Romanow commission delivered a comprehensive, evidenced based prescription for Canada's health care future. Romanow exposed the dangers of allowing profit seeking corporations to cherry pick from our public health care system. Will the government now cherry pick from Romanow's recommendations or will the Prime Minister today stand in his place and endorse the Romanow report as the blueprint for Canada's health care future?

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):**

Mr. Speaker, I asked Mr. Romanow to do a job and I thanked him for doing a good job. We have received all the reports, like the report from the Senate and some provincial reports. The Minister of Health met with her colleagues last Friday to discuss priorities. They have looked at all the files. I will be meeting with the first ministers at the end of January. I can give a guarantee to the hon. member that we intend to maintain the five conditions of the Canada Health Act and improve on it if possible.

**Mr. Bill Blaikie (Winnipeg—Transcona, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, my question is also for the Prime Minister. Commissioner Romanow talked a lot about accountability and certainly Canadians want to hold their various levels of government, federal and provincial, accountable for how they deal with the Romanow report. In that spirit of accountability and transparency, I wonder if the Prime Minister could tell us whether he would agree to have the first ministers conference on the Romanow report televised so that all Canadians could see just what he and other levels of government are saying.

**Right Hon. Jean Chrétien (Prime Minister, Lib.):**

Mr. Speaker, I am not looking for a show. I am looking for results. I think the best way to have a very productive first ministers conference is to have it like the one we had in September 2000 where the provinces agreed to make the results of their operations public. We want to improve it to make sure that the Canadian public is aware of the problems and the results of the Canadian system of health that is one of the best in the world.

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**Ms. Judy Wasylycia-Leis (Winnipeg North Centre, NDP):**

Mr. Speaker, on November 28, the same day that the Romanow commission called for the inclusion of diagnostic services under the Canada Health Act, the Canadian armed forces

announced a new deal with a for profit, investor owned MRI clinic in Halifax so that its members could jump the queue for medically necessary scans. Given that the armed forces are directly under the control of the federal government and since the Romanow commission has clearly indicated the threat to public health care posed by for profit diagnostic clinics, will the government move as quickly as possible to terminate the agreement and bring all government controlled practices in line with the Romanow commission's recommendations?

**Hon. Anne McLellan (Minister of Health, Lib.):**

Mr. Speaker, the armed forces are presently not covered under the Canada Health Act. As the hon. member is probably aware, there are a number of groups that were grandfathered when the act was put in place. Those groups include the Canadian armed forces, provincial workers compensation plans and some others.

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