

## **Romanow Commission De-brief and Observations** (by Chris Pomroy, SAC)

I attended the Ottawa hearings on the afternoon of 4 April, and here are my impressions. First, the Commission is in very capable hands. From the day's agenda posted on the website the day before, to Romanow's incisive but polite questions, the whole process is very efficient.

Second, the quality of the presentations, with a few exceptions, was excellent, and in many cases, written versions were available for the public.

In particular, the presentations by the Canadian Labour Congress and by the Canadian Health Coalition, both put major emphasis on Home Care and Pharmacare. As might be expected, both of these presentations were strongly against privatisation or "a two tier system". Besides being an ideological point of view, their position was backed up by some strong factual arguments. I believe that the transcript of these proceedings will eventually be on the website, and I recommend tracking it down.

The privatisation debate is no doubt a bit too political for the MS Society or its Chapters to become involved in, but the issues of Home Care and Pharmacare are of major concern to us. The Ontario Division has prepared a brief which deals with these and it is important that these views get to the Commission. The more Mr Romanow hears about them the more they will be seen as crucial.

At the Social Action Committee level, I would urge you all to go to [www.healthcarecommission.ca](http://www.healthcarecommission.ca) and complete the workbook. You may also send an email to the Commission expressing your views in more detail. Personally I am also thinking of sending emails to Clement and McClelland telling them that any action on health care should both wait for, and follow closely, the Commission recommendations, because in my view they will truly represent the concerns of the nation.

The Commission will be returning to Ottawa on 28 May, and I strongly recommend that you go if you can. In the meantime, watch it on CPAC.