

*Medicare*

The Minister of Agriculture (Mr. Greene) made a great name for himself last week when he told the women of Ottawa how to shop. There are some women in Ottawa who are not too happy about his program and they wonder if he were doing the shopping day in and day out, whether he would do any better than they do. We have inflation in this country and many of the things that are causing inflation are things that we feel we have to introduce to look after other people. As I say, we believe there should be a program developed immediately to ensure that people who cannot look after themselves are looked after. The provinces should be assisted in this field.

There is one more point I should like to mention in connection with this plan. I have referred before on occasion to the cost of social programs. I do not always agree with the Minister of Finance but I do agree that we cannot afford this program. Many people have medical plans now which are going to disappear. I have yet to see any program instituted by a government that could not have been provided more cheaply by private enterprise. As I say, I commend the Minister of Finance for realizing that.

Let us look at one or two of our socialistic programs. We are happy about the hospitalization plan. This was good legislation but it was not compulsory legislation. The individual had a choice. I mentioned costs. In 1958, when the Conservative government instituted hospitalization, payments by the federal government to the provinces amounted to \$158 million. In 1962, four years later, these payments had increased to \$420 million, nearly three times as much. I was a member of the committee which discussed the Canada pension program. Time after time it was brought to the attention of the government that rarely, if at all, does the cost of a plan of this type remain stationary. We know about the United States experience and their plan has proven five or six times as costly. As one speaker said the other day, when we introduce social legislation of this type it is forever. It is almost impossible to roll back such legislation. It can be amended and changed but the principle has to be carried forward.

● (5:10 p.m.)

I sometimes wonder what we are doing for future generations besides polluting our streams and destroying our good agricultural land. Are we encouraging thrift among our young people through these social programs?

[Mr. Howe (Wellington-Huron).]

Is this program from the cradle to the grave about which we hear so much talk really good for all of us? What right have we to legislate for future generations? In fact, what right have we to discuss legislation to bring in a program like this which will not be instituted for two years? No, Mr. Speaker, I think another look has to be taken at this piece of legislation.

As far as I am concerned, Mr. Speaker, I am going to vote for the amendment. I am not worried about the people who say that we are filibustering this piece of legislation. Neither am I worried about the people who say that if I vote against the legislation I shall be committing political suicide.

I say this, Mr. Speaker, because a lot of people in my area who have voted for me in a number of elections have sent me here to speak on their behalf and to see whether, if possible, I could influence the government to let them live their lives, to let them choose their own type of programs. I think that this is what I was sent here for, sir.

In closing I should like to make reference to an editorial which appeared in the *Montreal Gazette* for Wednesday, October 12, 1966. It is headed "Not Just When But How", and the article indicates how shallow a lot of the discussion which has taken place on this question has been. The article is discussing the timing of this program and suggests that the debate has not indicated how it will be paid for and how much, in the final analysis, it is going to cost. The article concludes:

But the heated debates of the last few weeks have not even raised the questions, much less begun a search for the answers. The debate has been on the irrelevant question of whether the scheme should be started next year or the year after.

It may be hoped that between now and July 1, 1968 there will be more discussion about the real issues which medicare raises, and less about the secondary ones; more about substance, and less about style.

**Mr. Milton L. Klein (Cartier):** Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of medicare. I look forward to the time when the services to be provided will be increased and the members of our society who, for example, require eye glasses or dentures will be able to obtain them under this plan. When we seek to legislate we try to make improvements. We can never achieve the ideal legislation in regard to any question. As a matter of fact, even nature itself is not perfect. For example, I have never been able to understand why human beings are given a second set of teeth at five years of age; it