

Medicare

There is another element which I think is very sacred indeed: Where I have the ability and the money to make a choice, I should be allowed some leeway in this matter. In some of the progressive provinces of Canada great steps have already been taken without the necessity of leadership from a socialist government or premier. Great steps have been taken in this direction. It is nonsense to say that because we do not subscribe to any one pattern we are antisocial or members of a ruling class.

It is not 1840 any longer. The ruling class today is probably the labour class, and I venture to say the labour people themselves do not want to be regimented to the extent certain hon. gentlemen pretend they do. I have been a labouring man most of my life, working with my hands. Perhaps I speak for a minority of one, but I do not want to be regimented. I want the opportunity to earn a good living in a rich, young, progressive land. That is all I want, and our main thought would be to see that every individual in Canada has a right to stand on his own feet. Only in a society where a lot of men are standing on their own feet shall we have provinces able to stand on their own feet, provinces which do not need to go to the federal government on their knees—and there are some provinces in exactly that position.

In my own province of Alberta there are many opportunities, for we are desperately short of labour. If there are any young men in Canada who feel they are not getting a proper deal, let them come out to Alberta and we will give them a shovel, or let them climb around an oil rig and earn wages of a kind which would make their fathers sick with envy. Then they will be able to stand up on their own feet and say what they think of anything, and not have to buckle under to the opinions of others, whether they are Conservatives, Liberals, Socialists, or anything else. There are still a few people in this nation who think that way.

We are not antisocial. We are men. You have to start there. If you do not have the desire to be independent, then for my money you are not a man, no matter with what political party you ally yourself. If you are young and healthy it is your duty to get out and help raise the gross national product so that we can afford social justice, no matter how high the price may be, in order to give every individual in this country a reasonable standard of living, a reasonable standard of

education and a reasonable standard of medical care.

That is where I stand. That is where every member of my party stands, those who are known to me—and I have spoken to most of them and I have also listened. That is where we stand. That is why this amendment is not only reasonable but essential, particularly to those who call themselves Liberals, if they have not abandoned the stand taken by their great leader who said we must have unanimity of consent and a consensus of opinion.

Is there any hon. member in this chamber who does not believe, in the depths of his own conscience, that his father or his mother trying to get along on \$75 a month should not be forced to pay for his or her own medical care. We say: Oh, let us not give the rich anything. If a man has \$1,000 in the bank, cut him down to the bare bones and make sure he lives on crackers and tea. Or if he hides his money and puts it in a barrel in the basement and claims he is broke, he can get assistance. But if a man is honest and has a little shack or \$1,000 in a saving bond, he is to be denied free medical care.

I think I know why the Liberal party has postponed the coming into force of this measure. I think there are men in that party who believe we have gone too far in our current spending for social justice and that we cannot afford more immediately. I was happy to hear the minister say that in the near future we shall have legislation before the house to look after those who are in need. This problem is to be fixed up. If this is the case, it will certainly plug one of the holes in the plan. But I think this is needed at this time. These people require medical care now. I do not want to be accused of filibustering or of trying to kill the bill when I am merely emphasizing the needs of those people who today cannot afford the cost of the pills and the medical care needed to keep them going.

I abhor the idea of a means test, in the first place. I do not know why an affluent society like ours—and it is affluent; look at the cars on the highway; look at the houses they are building, those who can afford them—should need such a test.

● (5:00 p.m.)

We are an affluent society and it seems to me that if it is necessary to tighten our belts a little bit to provide this kind of social justice, then we had better do it now, and never mind waiting until next year or three