

*Health and Welfare*

to a small group of people, to limited services, and hence a limited drain on the treasury? These things we do not know, and I think we must know about these matters before we can pass judgment on such a piece of legislation.

This motion covers a certain group of people with a certain type of medical care. But neither proposal is clearly defined. It also excludes some people. Let us look at some of the people who are excluded. Excluded, as I read it, from the free medical care might be the welfare cases in our municipalities. Surely these people are in need of medical, dental and other care. Surely they need it as much as some classes of federal pensioners. In proposing this motion the hon. member for Chapleau (Mr. Laprise) did not tell us why he selected for this special treatment the group he did, but excluded others. He did not say a word about those who are excluded from this care and those who might be equally deserving.

The last point on this proposed measure is the problem of provincial rights. We have had a lot of discussion about this problem in the last few months, and it seems to me that here is a motion which, if it were drafted as legislation and passed, would be a direct impingement on the rights of the provinces. Nothing has been said by the hon. member about that particular aspect of the problem, which I think is a pretty important factor and calls for further study.

This motion, Mr. Speaker, probably will not come to a vote. I think the reason for this is that we have here a good concept, something to which it is very difficult to say no. It is extremely difficult to go on record as saying no to giving medical care to people who need it. So we start with a good concept, to which it is difficult to say no. In proposing the motion the hon. member puts us on this side of the house in this position: What would happen if we voted for this motion? It is true the motion does not bind the government, but it is surely an expression by the house, directed to the government, of an opinion that the government should give consideration to doing certain things. A favourable recorded vote would be a pretty strong lever toward directing government action, and I believe the government could be properly held to account if they proceeded to do nothing. Therefore we on this side are put in the position of accepting this motion, of voting against it, or of doing something else. If the motion is agreed to, as I have mentioned earlier the government will be put in the position virtually of having to do something about bringing forward legislation in this area. Because, as I say, it is very difficult to say no to a measure which contains the germ of an idea as good as this.

We are, thus, in the difficult position of having to find some other means of stopping this motion, because this particular motion cannot be allowed to pass. I do not think any member of the house could, in all conscience, allow a blanket resolution of this kind to go through, or assent to a piece of legislation without having some concept of the cost involved. As was pointed out by the hon. member for Carleton (Mr. Francis), this could turn out to be a piece of social legislation of great magnitude; it could have a significant effect upon the economy of the whole country and we would be negligent in our duty if we allowed it to go through without knowing how great this effect might be.

Many of us are reluctant to put ourselves on record as being against some course of action which would be a nice thing to be able to do. So, in all probability, we discuss the question and are horrified because there is no further time left. I believe this is not a particularly good process. Maybe if we were to get a vote on some of these measures there would be a better discussion of these points. But I do not think we should be required to vote on some of these issues, unless their full impact has been presented to us. In other words, if we on this side are to be expected to say yes, or no, the speakers on the other side of the house should, equally, be expected to present a fully rounded package for discussion; they should indicate the less agreeable side of the proposition—the extent to which taxes would need to be raised to put their ideas into effect, and so on.

I do not think this motion will, in fact, come to a vote, but if it did, in the circumstances I would have no choice but to oppose it.

[*Translation*]

**Mr. Gerard Girouard (Labelle):** Mr. Speaker, just a few words about this motion. Like the members who spoke before me, I did not fail to notice a lack of precision in this motion, with regard to the beneficiaries and, finally, with regard to the amounts; as some understand it, private members' hour simply gives the members an opportunity to express their views, but I am happy just the same to make a few remarks about the measure under consideration.

I am pleased with this motion because the house realizes that it has some merit and especially because it enabled some members opposite to insist, in the name of the constitution, on the rights of the provinces.

While I was listening to the hon. members opposite, I told myself that if they had shown the same zeal during the election campaign,