

do the job as well or better. They have argued that we do not have enough doctors, nurses, facilities and other things needed.

Yesterday we witnessed the amazing spectacle of the hon. member for Calgary South (Mr. Ballard), quoting ostensibly from the Hall Commission report. He must have been looking through a microscope at the footnotes and back pages, because anyone listening to him would have got the impression that Mr. Justice Hall said in his report that we ought not to go ahead with a universal government-operated and sponsored medical care plan, because we do not have sufficient doctors or facilities.

I have before me a commission press release which summarizes the main recommendations of the Hall Commission report, and I should like to put on record for the benefit of some Conservative members just what Mr. Justice Hall said about this question. It is obvious to anybody who can read that every important proposal Mr. Justice Hall recommended has in fact been ignored and rejected by the Conservatives in their amendment.

• (4:00 p.m.)

This is what the commission headed by Mr. Justice Hall said. I am quoting from the official press release and hon. members will find these words on pages 7, 8 and 9.

The commissioners, after examining various alternatives for providing Canadians with health services, recommend that the health services program be made universally available. They recognize that many Canadians have availed themselves of the benefits of health prepayment plans but these are principally those who can afford protection or are employed where health insurance is provided or subsidized as a part of working conditions. They also recognize the initiative shown by Alberta and Ontario in developing legislation that provides for voluntary coverage of certain medical services, with subsidies for some citizens.

After prolonged study and investigation the Commissioners conclude that coverage of all, or virtually all, Canadians could not be achieved through the voluntary system and that only a universal program could achieve maximum coverage. They recommend against the adoption of the Alberta and Ontario plans in their present form because they are too restrictive and they fail to reach a great percentage of the population who need protection more than anyone else.

Later there is this passage:

In view of their recommendation that Canada develop an integrated comprehensive health services program, the commissioners reject all methods of subsidizing individuals that involves means testing. They do so on the grounds that the proportion of the population to be means tested would be too large and the administrative costs high, but also because it is not in harmony with human dignity. Instead they recommend that a health insurance

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fund be established in each province, administered as recommended in the preceding paragraph, contributed to by the federal government from general revenue and by provincial governments from premiums, sales or other taxes, or general revenues as they may best determine.

I think it is obvious from the few quotations I have put on the record that Mr. Justice Hall and the commissioners recommended essentially the principles which are embodied in the bill we have before us. We are being told by members of the Conservative opposition that we cannot go ahead with this plan now because the provinces are not supporting the proposal. I suggest to those hon. members that they look at the record of what happened when this country implemented hospitalization. It was the Liberal government under Mr. St. Laurent which brought in the bill for government hospitalization. It was a Liberal government which said that that legislation would not go into effect until the majority of the people of Canada as represented by the provincial governments agreed to participate.

That bill gathered dust and did not reach the statute books. It was Mr. Diefenbaker and his Progressive Conservative government who, after they came into power, brought hospitalization into effect by saying to the provinces, "We are ready to go ahead. We are ready to pay the federal share of hospitalization to any province, even one province, if it is ready to go ahead." When Mr. Diefenbaker said that, it was not very long before we had hospitalization in every province of this country.

Is there a single member of parliament or a single person in Canada who thinks this country made a mistake when we implemented hospitalization? People who are close to me have had hospital bills of \$6,000, \$7,000 and \$8,000 paid by their provincial hospitalization plan, which meant that they did not go into debt for a year, or two, or ten as would have happened earlier. These hospital bills were paid because we finally had a government plan.

I suggest to the government and the members of the Conservative opposition that if the government stand fast on this bill and say, "These are the principles which the bill will embody, the principles which Mr. Justice Hall enunciated so clearly and eloquently, and we, the federal government are prepared to help finance a plan which is universal", the provincial governments, whether they like it or not, will go ahead with the plan because they will not be able to stay out. I do not