

Supply—Health and Welfare

specifically to the most recent member of the medicare club, Ontario.

• (4:20 p.m.)

Does the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre suggest because the Ontario plan does not meet the first provision laid down by the federal government that Ontario should not qualify for any federal aid? Is that what he is suggesting? Does he feel that because there are still some provinces which look realistically at what such programs cost and decide on programs within their means, they should be penalized for careful budgeting? The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre also takes the hon. member for Simcoe East to task for mentioning how slow the Liberal party has been in implementing a plan for health care. Has the hon. member forgotten that in Saskatchewan in 1944 the C.C.F. party rode to power on a program of universal medicare that did not come into being until 1962 and then only after the party to which he belongs mounted an attack on an honoured profession with such intensity and force that the wounds opened then have still not completely healed?

When I hear such things as how terrible the means test is, I wonder how sincere these comments are. It takes me back to the nightmare years of 1960, 1961 and 1962. What a smokescreen. Whenever someone such as the hon. member for Simcoe East suggests that there are areas of need in medical care such as more doctors, more medical schools, funds for the chronically ill and mentally ill, up go the smokescreens and we are treated to a heartrending story of how evil and debasing is the means test. Every time they speak they attempt to show that the socialists are the only ones in favour of all that is good. If anyone else attempts to raise any objections, however sincere they may be, they are treated to this display of socialistic virtue.

But, Mr. Chairman, let us look at the record very briefly. When the party these hon. members represent was in power in Saskatchewan, did they abolish the means test? If you were an old age pensioner who needed supplementary allowances, did you get them without a rigid and degrading examination of your finances? If you were a widow on mother's allowance and needed more milk for your children, did you get it without this rigid and degrading means test? As a matter of fact, I recall cases—I can give hon. members the details at any time—when mothers did not even get the milk and a

[Mr. Brand.]

widow would have to go to the social aid department of the city to get money in order to buy milk for her children.

An hon. Member: Where?

Mr. Brand: In Saskatchewan. Where else? Here is another point. Could you get a university scholarship or loan from the government of Saskatchewan without a means test? Ask anyone who has tried. Ask me. I did not object to it and I was grateful for what they did. It is this duplicity, Mr. Chairman, that has prompted me to rise in reply today.

I could go on to discuss hospital beds. We have heard laudatory comments concerning the hospitalization plan and features of it that have been a boon to doctors and patients alike. This I do not deny; we have had these things. But what have we on the distaff side? I listened very carefully to the speeches made in this connection and examined *Hansard* again last night to see whether there was anything more on this subject but there was nothing.

Consider my province of Saskatchewan. There we have a real paradox. Our patient-bed ratio is among the best in the world and yet we are faced with long hospital waiting lists. Even cancer patients have to wait months for a bed and some heart attack and fracture cases have been turned away because there are no beds for them. Imagine the situation at the University Hospital where for months complete wards are closed because of the critical shortage of nursing and other personnel. These situations have all existed; they are a matter of public record. Hospitals are faced with ever-increasing costs of operation but still there are not enough funds to provide some of the modern equipment that is considered to be so essential in running a hospital today. These are facts, Mr. Chairman, not fantasy but grim facts.

I hope that the Minister of National Health and Welfare will not turn out to be another of those who fail to see the situation in its true light and blunder on blinded by the brilliant beam of political opportunism. I sincerely hope he is not one of those. I could go on and discuss medical care and the increasing demands on doctors' services, the over utilization, the ever-increasing costs, the deterioration in quality care, but I do not wish to prolong these estimates at this time more than is necessary. Suffice it to say that we must look very closely at these other areas of need in this country. I ask the