

Medicare

Health and Welfare will state the position as it relates to costs of administration, and the escalation of those costs.

Canada is a land of compromises. Why cannot we compromise on this scheme. We have already had a compromise from hon. members opposite, which came as a result of other problems, and which was thrown around at another meeting not too long ago. Why cannot all Canadians in this country compromise, and have a compromise at a national level regardless of party politics? I suggest to the minister seriously that we should iron out some of the kinks of the scheme, but that we should at least go so far as providing this service to those who need it now but who cannot afford to pay for it. I refer especially to the old age pensioners. If you are not going to give them any old age assistance increase, at least let us have a pilot project to help them. With that we could also iron out the kinks of the plan. Before ramming a compulsory provision down the throats of the provinces, why not have a dialogue to discuss with the ministers—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am sorry to interrupt the hon. member but his time has expired.

Some hon. Members: Carry on.

Mr. Speaker: Has the hon. member unanimous agreement to carry on?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Nowlan: Mr. Speaker, I wish to thank hon. members of the house for listening to my rhetoric. This is the first speech where I have gone the full length—whether in committee where you can speak for 20 minutes, or in the house where you can speak for 40 minutes. I have been so long because of the importance of the speech, and because I have tried in a limited way to express my conclusions to the Minister of National Health and Welfare, who I hope understood the spirit in which they were expressed. I do not want to trespass on what any other hon. member might wish to say, but I hope the minister shows to the Canadian people that he has the capacity for logic and that he can meet problems, and not just use many, many words.

I hope that the minister can bring the ten provinces together in a spirit of compromise, because we have had that spirit and we shall continue to have it if we are to continue growing. I suggest that the greatest pilot

[Mr. Nowlan.]

project and the greatest birthday present for Canadians would be to have such a project implemented by July 1, 1967, for those who cannot pay for it and who need it. I think there should be discussions with the provinces about the ramifications of this scheme, so that we can have a plan that is not rammed down our throats, that does not trespass on provincial jurisdictions but that not only the members of the government but all members of the house can be proud of—because all members of the house are in favour of the principle.

Mr. Speaker: Is the house ready for the question?

Mr. Donald MacInnis (Cape Breton South): Mr. Speaker—

An hon. Member: Now you will get it.

Mr. MacInnis (Cape Breton South):—may I inform the Liberal members across the way who have indicated that they do not want to hear anybody on this side of the house that I should be perfectly willing to relinquish the floor if anybody would guarantee to me that they would get up and tell the truth. If my hon. friend for Digby-Annapolis-Kings (Mr. Nowlan) could not think of a name to apply to the minister, the minister ought not to worry: I know another name.

On Thursday the hon. member for Northumberland (Mr. Hees) when speaking on this bill mentioned two reasons why the medicare program is delayed. He said, first of all, that the provinces representing 85 per cent of the population of this country have refused to go along with it, and that the remaining 15 per cent of the people would be unable to make it work successfully.

The second reason is, as the Hall Commission report made very clear, that we do not have enough doctors, dentists, nurses and medical technicians to enable this program to operate successfully. The hon. member for Northumberland should have mentioned a third reason, a reason which throughout my province and throughout the maritimes is gaining publicity. The minister is basking in the glory of that publicity.

I do not think he has allowed this type of publicity to circulate throughout the maritimes, but an impression has been left with many people—and as I say, it has not been created by the minister—that the medicare program was blocked by the Minister of Finance in order to stymie the bid of the Minister of National Health and Welfare for