

*Medicare*

1968. How can he be so sure when his certainty about July 1, 1967, has proven to be wrong?

The minister has put forward other excuses for not proceeding earlier with medicare. He says that one of the reasons for its delay is the financial position of some of the provinces. I agree that the provinces are in debt. The province of Ontario is in the situation of deficit financing; they are in debt. Mr. Robarts, the premier of Ontario, has said that the federal government is denying him \$280 million over the next two years, and his government will have to look at health, welfare and education to see whether they cannot pare some of their expenditures.

• (8:10 p.m.)

I want to say to the minister, and I want to say it with all seriousness, that when he tells us he is pouring \$500 million into the health resources fund he knows very well that the provinces have to put up half of that sum. How can they afford to put up the buildings needed, start doing research in the medical field and provide training for doctors whom we need so badly in Canada to give the Canadian people the medical care they deserve? How does he equate the two?

I am sure the minister is well aware that provincial and municipal debts and taxes are increasing at a far faster rate than federal taxes, and that in the foreseeable future they will continue to increase at a much faster rate than federal taxes. If the minister does not supply more money to the provinces he will never get the doctors and encourage research and we will be a second-rate country medically.

The Canadian Medical Association came to Ottawa to ask for a partial medicare plan to cover the 30 per cent of the people who are needy. As a matter of fact the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre said that it was a great disappointment to him that they were not being covered. Today four provinces, representing approximately half the population of the Dominion of Canada, are covering these people. What the minister has done is to exclude the people in the maritimes and Newfoundland. Are they second-rate citizens? I am sure there are many problems posed by lack of skilled medical manpower, but if the minister cannot provide us with a full medicare plan why did he not at least say: "We will give you this partial plan which will start on July 1, 1967, which will give you time to work out the kinks and loopholes and will give the medical profession time to arrange

their house in preparation for the full medicare plan?" But he has to go whole hog or not at all. He did not even accept the plan requested by the medical profession which would be acceptable to all of us because we all want the needy covered.

There is great urgency in covering those in need. The province of Ontario has recognized this. I wish to say to the minister that he has to face either of two facts: either we are neglecting the needy people, or it would not increase our taxes to cover them under a medicare plan. He cannot have it both ways because if these people are being looked after at present somebody must be paying for it. This is not a legitimate excuse.

I will not continue to speak on the subject at length but I hope I have set the record straight. There is no financial reason which might not exist in 1968 for not going ahead with this program now because as I looked at the financial record last night I was made aware of the large sums of money which are going out of the country. I would like to ask the minister whether he has any ideas on how to stem the outflow of funds from this country at a rate three times faster than last year. If this rate of outflow continues the minister will not be able to introduce medicare on July 1, 1968, or else he will tell us that other important programs will have to go by the board. In view of the signs of a deteriorating economic situation, how can the minister stand in the house and tell us that we will have the medicare program? I ask him, why he did not go ahead with the partial medicare plan for which the Canadian Medical Association asked him and, I believe, asked the Prime Minister? They said: "Give us this partial plan and we will try to work in the doctors and set it up so that when you are able to bring in the full plan we will at least have ironed out the kinks, and in the meantime the needy people in Canada will be covered".

We have to face two facts: either we are providing medical care for the needy people of Canada or we are not covering them. If we are covering them, then our taxes should not be increased one cent by introducing a partial medicare plan.

**Mr. Lewis:** Mr. Chairman, some of us in the committee had hoped that in view of the developments in the economic situation in Canada since last September the Minister of Finance and the government would decide to reverse their position on the postponement of the effective date for medicare. However, they did not. I say that the amendment before us is