

To mention the two provinces with which I am more familiar, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island—and I am sure the same situation exists in other provinces—mobile dental clinics are sent around to the rural areas where there is no resident dentist. The children are charged a fee of \$2 for a complete treatment. If the parent is able to pay the fee, it is paid; if not, the treatment is free. Under this amendment, I ask what would happen if these provinces approached the Governor in Council and asked that this treatment be included under this medical care program? Will the minister reply that he is technically allowed to move but cannot move because no one has given him any instructions as to the specific direction in which he should move?

The amendment also weakens the influence and the stature of the national professional association. Each professional association—that is, the medical, dentistry, optometry, in the province—will be left in a position of having to negotiate directly with the provincial government, and in some of the smaller provinces the associations are so small they will be in a very poor position to negotiate with the government.

I come now to deal for a moment with the conditions necessary to qualify under this act. The first of these is the necessity for 90 per cent coverage. I do not quarrel with the fact that a certain percentage of our population needs to be covered, but I cannot go along with the 90 per cent coverage. This is entirely too high, and it is being forced—I would say crammed—down the throats of the provinces. It is not necessary for every person in a province to be covered, and I do not think the provinces are anxious to cover 90 per cent of the population. This is borne out by the Nova Scotia brief to the Hall Commission, in which they state:

We would urge, based on our own experience, that the federal legislation should be sufficiently general and flexible that a province would be able to develop and implement a plan that meets its individual needs.

Prince Edward Island has a limited plan to cover those in receipt of old age assistance, widows' allowances and other welfare payments. An arrangement was made with the Blue Cross and Blue Shield to cover these people so that they would receive these benefits. The annual cost is, I believe, in the vicinity of \$31 per person. As you all know, the province is not wealthy; in fact it is in

serious financial difficulty. Why not let this province, if the provincial government so desires, or any other province for that matter, develop its own program according to its own specific needs and the ability of the province to pay? The Minister of Health in introducing the legislation in the other house emphasized that the figure of 90 per cent carried no compulsion, and he went on to say that the only compulsion was taxation. I say this bill is about as voluntary as income tax, and I do not see too many people rushing forward voluntarily to pay more income tax.

The public authority, according to the description given by the minister, can provide leeway for non-profit organizations to operate. I think this is a good idea and I would like to see the provinces pay particular attention to physician-operated plans.

The portability mentioned as a feature of this bill is very desirable and most necessary. But here again the amendment I referred to, this distorted piece of modern art, can weaken portability because, as I interpret it, one province may have oral surgery and optometry covered, while another may not.

Senator McCutcheon referred to clause 8 the other evening and mentioned the desire of the federal Government to move out of cost-sharing programs, and the sponsor of the bill indicated this possibility. This causes me to shudder. I hate to think of the possibility that in five years time the provinces will be left with the full burden of this expensive measure.

Hon. Mr. Connolly (Ottawa West): That is not suggested, is it?

Hon. Mr. Phillips: I would remind the honourable senator that in the introduction of the bill it was stated that the federal government may wish to move out of this field, and that, in my view, is why clause 8 is in the bill. I hope the sponsor had no advance notice that the federal Government was considering leaving this field at some time in the future.

Hon. Mr. Smith (Queens-Shelburne): May I ask a question to clear this matter in my own mind? Was there not an addition to that statement which seemed to point out that there would be a certain number of income tax points turned over to provinces which might decide to take this over and run its own program? There was a *quid pro quo* arrangement.

Hon. Mr. Phillips: There is a suggestion of that, but let us apply it to our own particular