

Health and Welfare

federal government are included, then I believe this type of service is provided for these people now.

Then, too, I take exception to the use of the word "free" in the wording of this resolution because this puts people in the category of accepting charity, which is a degrading state. We, in this party, feel that medical care is something one has a right to pay for, and therefore one is not accepting charity. Then, too, this should not be limited to old age pensioners or to federal government pensioners, but rather it should be available on a universal basis. People should receive medical care in accordance with the need for medical care, rather than in accordance with ability to pay.

At the present time, I believe it is rather degrading to subject these people to a means test. This takes a person out of the category of being a human being, because in many cases he is herded into hospital clinics. It is degrading because the person cannot have any worldly possessions at all. He must get rid of them before he is eligible for free medical care. This care is very limited so far as private doctors are concerned. The patient is allowed to go to the hospital for major procedures, such as surgery. In the hospital students who are learning, interns, are allowed to look after these people.

This state of affairs does not make one very happy. I have worked in it; I have seen it. I have had many patients myself in need of medical, dental or ophthalmological care, and this care was not available to them under any circumstances, unless a friend provided it or someone donated money.

Another bad feature of charitable care of the sort we have now is that a person is looked after by the private doctor up to a certain point, and then the patient goes to a hospital clinic. At that point that person loses complete contact with his family doctor, which I think is a bad state of affairs. Contact should be maintained. It must be something which is continuous, and the patient's history must be followed through in all its phases. If such a person is to receive charitable care, I think there should be liaison with the family doctor so that the patient is adequately looked after and cared for on a continuous and interested basis, keeping in mind that the man is a human being, regardless of his financial state.

The degradation of charity suggested by this motion is a very poor suggestion. On the other hand the suggestion that these people receive medical care is an excellent one. The wording of the motion is very poor in that it is not explicit at the beginning and it is too all-inclusive of the type of care a

person gets, which is putting him on a charitable basis, as I have said, rather than on the basis that the man has earned his right to health.

I think the government should set themselves up as an ideal employer, and their employees should be covered by a plan, contributions toward which are deducted from their pay, and the plan carried on after retirement. At least, that should be done on a temporary basis until we have some universal form of medical care for all our citizens. The government should be an ideal employer. The motion intimates that government employees are not adequately cared for but require some special action to get complete medical care on a charitable basis. I think the wording of the motion is such that the question needs further study. This motion should be more explicit in its definitions before it can be accepted and approved.

Mr. D. G. Hahn (Broadview): Mr. Speaker, in rising to speak to this motion I think all of us can be tagged with the same tag, and that is that we literally do not know what we are talking about; because the resolution is so ill defined it is impossible to really clearly understand what the sponsor is proposing. The motion suggests that the government should provide medical services to all federal government pensioners. But it stops there without, as has been previously said, defining the motion further. It does not say which particular federal government pensioners. It does not say whether we are talking about old age pensioners, veterans or retired civil servants. It does not say whom we are talking about, so we have no idea from the motion how large a body of people we are referring to.

In the second place, it does not clarify exactly what type of medical, surgical, dental and ophthalmological care should be provided. Does this mean free glasses? Does it mean free medicines? Does it mean free dentures? We just do not know. So the motion tosses out what is a very nice idea, but does not in itself define it. It leaves out what I think is a pretty important piece of information which must be brought before the house, if we are to look at a measure such as this. Nowhere does it indicate how much this service would cost. How can we in all conscience pass any piece of legislation in this house without some idea of the cost involved? Not only should we know the cost; we must also have some idea of how we are going to raise the funds. Is the recommendation of this particular motion within the economic power of the country? What effect will it have? Is it far reaching enough that it is going to be a major piece of social legislation which will put a major burden on the treasury, or is the motion referring only