

*Medicare*

an adequate medicare scheme operating in this country. This is not because we have not waited for it. The party presently in office has dangled medicare before the electorate for about 47 years. And now, of course, the legislation has been brought in, but its operation has been postponed for another year.

It is interesting to learn that postponement was not supported by the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacEachen). Indeed, with the clairvoyance which only Peter was given to possess, we were told in great detail of the anguished conversations which took place in the Chateau Laurier, of threats of resignation on all sides, of luncheons and cajoling by the Prime Minister (Mr. Pearson) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp) to persuade the Minister of National Health and Welfare not to resign.

**Mr. MacEachen:** Fiction.

**Mr. Scott (Danforth):** I thought for a moment he might be "doing a Marchand". The Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Marchand) has not resigned this week, but it is still early in the week and we may yet hear one of his weekly threats to resign because something has happened that he does not like. It is becoming boring, now, though no doubt the charade will be repeated within the next few weeks.

The reason originally given for the postponement of this scheme was that we could not have it because of inflation. This was greeted by a roar of derision from coast to coast, because it is obvious that if we are trying to deal with inflation today we add nothing by postponing a scheme on which we are not going to spend any money until next July at any event. That reason did not last very long. Indeed, as my hon. friend from Greenwood (Mr. Brewin) suggested, if we accept the philosophy of this government we will never get medicare, because when we are in a small recession we cannot have medicare because we have to get the country rolling; and now, when members opposite claim they have got the country rolling, we are apparently so prosperous that we cannot have medicare because it would damage the economy.

No matter which way you go, you cannot win with the Liberal party. I sometimes wonder just how gullible the Liberals think the people of Canada are. I notice the Minister of National Health and Welfare is smiling and nodding his head. He obviously believes they are able to absorb a great deal more of the

[Mr. Scott (Danforth).]

hokum they have been getting from this government.

As I said, the reason initially given for postponement was greeted with a roar of derision from coast to coast. In a way, it is amusing, the manner in which the Liberal party has played around with this scheme over the years. But there is a more serious side to it. I am bound to think back to the period of the last election. I will not put on record all the commitments which were made but those of us who were here in 1962 and 1963 will remember the great debate we had about nuclear arms. I remember the pontifical way in which one minister after another got up to say: We must honour our commitments; the Liberal party always honours its commitments; the government is committed to nuclear arms and we must honour our commitment, above all. We heard this for days and days. It is a pathological obsession with the Liberal party that they honour their commitments—when it suits their purpose.

Well, in the last election campaign they made a pretty strong commitment. I have an article here from the Toronto *Daily Star* of September 23, 1965. The heading is: "Medicare by July 1, 1967, Hellyer tells Scarborough". The Minister of National Defence (Mr. Hellyer) was attending a meeting at which the hon. member for York-Scarborough (Mr. Stanbury) was nominated. This was a positive commitment by the hon. member for Trinity and, incidentally, the hon. member for York-Scarborough made a similar commitment. It was received, we learn, with standing ovations. Then, of course, the Prime Minister went up and down the country telling people that we would have medicare in Canada by July 1, 1967.

● (8:00 p.m.)

The then minister of national health and welfare, the hon. member for Niagara Falls (Miss LaMarsh), went so far as to say everything was fixed, there were no problems, no hurdles, that this Liberal government had cleared away all obstructions and there was no reason in the world why we could not have medicare by July 1, 1966.

**An hon. Member:** That was L.S.D.

**Mr. Scott (Danforth):** An hon. member suggests that L.S.D. was involved. I do not want to make any such allegation, but the hon. member will be speaking shortly and he can elucidate further on that particular point of view. But, Mr. Speaker, member after member after member, candidate after candidate