

*Medical Care Act*

introduces a bill in which it states that from now on the federal government will pay 50 per cent of the costs. It is lying when it says this, because it does not pay: Canadians do. Canadians could not care less whether medicare is paid by Ottawa or the provinces: what they want is quality services, which suit them and to which they are entitled.

But our politicians, in Ottawa as well as in the province of Quebec, brag about their achievements. How often have my hon. opposites heard members and ministers of the Union Nationale brag about having built such or such a stretch of road. That has been heard. And I have heard it as well among the Liberals as in the Bourassa government. Thanks to the Bourassa Liberals, such and such a stretch of road was built; medicare was kept, social welfare is paid. The same thing goes on in Ottawa: we hear ministers say that thanks to minister so-and-so, such and such a subsidy is paid. Such thing has been done thanks to the Liberal government. Mr. Speaker, politicians who have this kind of attitude contribute to divide Canadians and make them confused when it comes to constitutional priorities. This is so true that on several occasions the right hon. Prime Minister (Mr. Trudeau) and some of his colleagues complained that the federal participation was not mentioned in some projects.

All this, Mr. Speaker, to demonstrate how important it is to politicians, both in Ottawa and in Quebec, to give information on the source of money, but politicians conveniently forget that the money comes from the taxpayers' pockets. I would be curious, Mr. Speaker, to ask the citizens whether they think they have their money worth with the taxes they pay.

Mr. Speaker, I would not like to dwell on the subject but I think this kind of attitude is revolting.

Tonight the government asks us to support its position, to limit or put a maximum to its financial contribution to 50 per cent of the costs. What will happen after that? This is law in Ottawa and it puts the provinces in a position to accept it unconditionally. They no longer have the choice. Then they will come and praise the merits of federalism, they will tell us that separatists are wrong, whether they come from Quebec or from other provinces. In fact, it must not be forgotten that there are separatists outside Quebec.

Mr. Speaker, I think the government makes a very serious mistake by imposing this bill on us, by urging us to adopt it rapidly without the question being thoroughly discussed. This government cannot give us tonight the firm assurance of the participation of the provinces. It cannot either tell us where the provinces will get the money to make their contribution. Mr. Speaker, when they do not want to answer our questions on that sort of issue, they talk about equalization. They say equalization will settle the problem. Equalization is the kind of road roller which comes along and fashions justice and equality between the provinces. Mr. Speaker, this is quite an easy argument, because it is superficial and very few people understand it. All this is so fuzzy for the ordinary mortal that, finally, politicians can once more shove anything down our throats.

I wish to make it clear that I want no part in that kind of legislation. In my view, the government tonight should take a positive attitude. We did not contrive medicare, I am sorry to say. One day the government rose to its feet and

[Mr. Fortin.]

cried out: Long live medicare, long live the government which had the kind thought of giving you medicare! To vote for us means to vote for medicare.

I recall having heard that kind of things in Quebec, in my own riding. The people swallowed it up in good faith. They really are gullible to believe all they are told. Now, Mr. Speaker, the government on seeing rising costs cannot tell us that we are getting better services, so it simply moves one step backwards and says: From now on, we are going to pay only 50 per cent of the costs, kids, you take care of the rest by yourselves. You are on your own! The government says further: But it is a cost sharing program. It being so, Mr. Speaker, it means that the provinces agree to pay the remaining 50 per cent. It means that the provinces have evaluated their capacity to pay the missing 50 per cent, if it is a cost sharing program.

It is either a provincial program or a federal program or a cost sharing program. The government is not prepared to let the whole jurisdiction in the hands of the provinces. The provinces are not prepared to leave it to the federal government either, and yet both want it to be a cost sharing program. They do not agree. There are no discussions between them, because there again is a money problem. This is the reality of Canadian politics, Mr. Speaker. Much as we want to bury our head in the sand, refuse to admit it, it is again a question of money. You can say that Social Crediters talk only about money, but what is the subject of the bill the Liberals are pushing tonight? Money. And why does the federal government want to cut back to 50 per cent? It is because it needs money. And who pays, Mr. Speaker? The Canadian people do.

● (2120)

On behalf of all my fellow citizens of Lotbinière, Mr. Speaker, I want to say that I disagree with this bill, that I will certainly vote against it because it is contrary to Canadian unity. This is not how we should negotiate with our partners, the provinces. If Canada exists, it is because of the provinces. In fact, Canada is merely the union of the provinces. The federal government is not the first government in Canada, contrary to what the Liberals may believe, but the provincial governments are, and our confederation will be strong as long as each province is. It is not with this kind of oppressive legislative measures that we will achieve a strong unity. Mr. Speaker, no wonder we have complete splits in the country about such measures. I see the hon. member for Laval (M. Roy) in front of me. I shall remind him of an illustration. The Liberals, and I must apologize for referring to that this evening, the Liberals were most happy to see the Conservatives fight each other at their leadership convention. I myself heard a number of them making ugly remarks. I must also say that as far as the financing the Olympic Games is concerned, a large number of French-speaking Liberal members from Quebec want the government to pay a share of the deficit, because they come from Quebec and suggest this is not only Quebec games but Canadian games. But I also know a number of English-speaking Liberal members who have no desire that we share in the financing of the games. Therefore, this is not a partisan issue, but rather a question of whether one believes in Canada, or whether one does not.

As far as I am concerned, whether on the matter of the Progressive Conservative convention, the Olympic Games