

Medicare

I must say, after listening to the hon. gentleman and the terms of his amendment, I cannot reconcile his speech and the terms of the amendment with the remarks made by his leader when the Hall Commission report was tabled. At that time and in the press later in eulogistic terms he said that that report laid the foundation for legislation which his government intended to introduce.

As a matter of fact, very similar arguments were used by some sections of the medical profession against the introduction of the national health services insurance plan in 1921 and again in 1936 when Dr. Weir introduced a similar plan in the legislature of British Columbia. I remember the disappointment among many members of the Liberal party at that time who were sincerely concerned about these matters. I remember one cabinet minister who was very disappointed—the hon. member for Vancouver East will bear me out on this—the former Hon. Mary Ellen Smith, who was a social reformer and who did great work in the legislature of British Columbia, particularly in connection with establishing the rights of women, non-discrimination and so on.

Although I know outstanding doctors who supported the plan—as does the hon. member for Hamilton South (Mr. Howe) whose remarks we listened to the other day with great interest—in this house and in the country, I think that owing to the political climate which existed between the federal and provincial governments in Canada in 1921 and even in 1936, it would have been easier to introduce even a modest national plan at that time which could have been developed with co-operation and experience. I am not suggesting for a moment, Mr. Speaker, that any plan which is designed as a result of legislation will not be open to improvement. There will be defects. We will find there is a shortage of doctors in certain areas and that there are certain requirements which have not been foreseen. But our point in this group is that we should have got on with this legislation years ago.

I oppose the amendment also because on page 91 of the Hall Commission report the following appears:

While we are aware that shortages of physicians, dentists, nurses, and other paramedical personnel will make it difficult to establish the full personal health services program our charter envisages, nonetheless the fact that there are shortages must not be used as an excuse to delay initiating programs and plans.

[Mr. Herridge.]

I think the Hall report completely offsets the remarks made by the hon. member for Simcoe East. I presume they mean that some members of the medical profession are also opposed to what they are pleased to term socialized medicine. I am always interested to see how some doctors are sort of confused concerning the application of socialized measures. What about socialized education? According to *Hansard* of April 22, 1964, the actual cost to the community for each doctor who graduates in Canada is \$16,900. Multiply this by the number of doctors in Canada and it amounts to a considerable total.

I fully realize the need to increase the number of doctors if the Canadian people are going to receive the medical services to which they are entitled, and I will support government assistance to that end because when this legislation is adopted we want it to work as effectively as possible. When we come to the matter of training doctors, however, we do not hear any objection to socialization of education in this regard; yet I have heard doctors object very strongly to what they call socialized medicine. Without a doubt experience will indicate, as I said before, the need for amendments to this legislation and the need for the inclusion of dentists, optometrists, chiropractors and other medical services. If the government does not see fit at this time to include these groups, we hope the plan when it comes into effect will indicate that if people are going to have over-all medical attention these other groups should be included.

Let us recognize the wishes of the majority of the people as expressed by numerous organizations and as expressed during the last election by the votes that were given on behalf of the Liberal candidates, by the votes in many cases given on behalf of Progressive Conservative candidates, by the votes given to members of this party who have always taken a firm stand on this issue, and by some votes given to members of the *Créditiste* and Social Credit parties who have indicated a support for the principle some time in eternity when they hope sufficient doctors will be available.

As I said before, if the people of Great Britain and Europe can give effect to sound health insurance plans, surely we in Canada with all our vast natural resources, if we manage them properly—and all wealth depends on natural resources; the foundation of all wealth is natural resources—can do even better than the people in those countries have