

Admission of Tubercular Refugees

question that now is the time, in our opinion, for the government to go forward in the field of national health insurance. Reference has been made by the two previous speakers to other health programs. The people of Canada have had to wait over a period of 13 years between the first initiation in the field of hospital insurance and the completion of such a program for all the people of this country. We are hopeful that in the field of national health insurance and a complete medical care program, the time between the initiation in this field by one province and the provision of these facilities for all provinces will be much shorter than 13 years.

I am hopeful, too, and I would press upon the government, that there should be no repetition of the kind of action taken in regard to old age security. This should not be a means for delaying the implementation of a program, but rather the government should go forward a full step in this direction.

Mr. Speaker, I imagine that the announcement that has just been made by the Prime Minister will receive much greater commendation than will the important announcement made in this house over a long period last evening. However, for the government this may perhaps be a bit of a blood transfusion for the blue baby which is in such ill health at the moment, and which was introduced by the Minister of Finance last night.

Mr. Diefenbaker: In view of the statements made—

Mr. Pickersgill: I am rising on a point of order, Mr. Speaker. I think it is a clearly established principle—

Mr. Speaker: Order. I should like to hear the hon. member.

Hon. J. W. Pickersgill (Bonaville-Twillin-gate): I think it has been a clearly established principle, established by Your Honour's predecessor, that when ministerial statements are made to the house the opportunity is given for comment by the leaders of other parties. This does not result in a debate nor give any minister, including the Prime Minister, any right to make further debating statements about it. I would hope that the rules would be observed in this instance.

Mr. Speaker: Has the Prime Minister a point of order?

Mr. Diefenbaker: I am speaking on the point of order, Mr. Speaker. The opposition often follows the course of making a partisan speech when a purely objective statement is made.

Mr. Pickersgill: The suggestion is that it is terrible for the opposition to be partisan.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I presented a completely unprovocative statement. Surely I have the right to reply to the statement made by the hon. member for Essex East that we should follow the example of his party on health insurance.

Mr. Speaker: There is no doubt that the practice is that the statement itself should be factual, that comments should be non-provocative and not of a debating order and therefore such as not to give rise to any necessity for reply. It has not been the practice to admit reply. The only exception that I myself have accepted is where the comment on the statement has made some interpretation of the statement which needs explanation, or in other words has given a wrong impression of the statement itself which requires explanation. If that circumstance arises I think the house would agree that, as at any time when an hon. member feels that what he has said has been misapplied or misinterpreted, he should have the right to call attention to that fact. But simply to reply would, to my mind not be in order. I leave it to the Prime Minister to govern himself accordingly. That is the position I take.

Mr. Diefenbaker: I always want to uphold the rules of the house, Mr. Speaker, but I find it extremely difficult to understand why I should be denied the right to reply to a number of statements that have no relevance whatsoever to the matter I brought before the house. The particular reference I wish to make, on the basis of the ruling Your Honour made, is this. The hon. member for Essex East stated that the purpose of this procedure was to bring about a stall, or something of that kind, and he said that we in this government in connection with hospital insurance should follow the course of the party that he represents when it was in office. We do not intend to follow that course for 38 years; it is far too long.

Mr. Pickersgill: I am rising on a question of privilege affecting each member of the opposition. My question of privilege is this. A few moments ago in this house, which is consecrated to party government, the Prime Minister objected to the opposition being partisan. Surely we are not going to have a one party state instituted by this government.

Mr. Starr: It looks as though you are against the national health plan.

UNITED NATIONS**ANNOUNCEMENT OF ADMISSION OF ADDITIONAL TUBERCULAR REFUGEES**

Hon. Howard C. Green (Secretary of State for External Affairs): Mr. Speaker, I should like to make an announcement about the