

Medicare

the other night, that the Liberal party may be stronger, that its organization may be more democratic, but it is now at dead centre or, as I suggest, it is now at centre, dead.

And so, Mr. Speaker, we want to make it clear that we are in support of the bill that is before us. We disapprove of the loophole that is contained in it which will permit the private carriers to handle medicare in the provinces if the provincial governments so desire. We do not like the way in which universality has been watered down, and there are some other changes that need to be made in the bill.

But we support the main point of the bill, namely, that there shall be a medicare program on the basis of four cardinal principles and that this legislation shall come into effect on July 1, 1967. That is what is in the bill now, and five of the eight operative clauses contain that date. If the minister is going to change the effective date he will have to change five of the clauses in the bill, but it will be over our protest. We will do our best to prevent any such amendments from passing and we hope the Liberals on the other side who say they want medicare on July 1, 1967, will join with us in voting against any of these amendments.

I come back to what the minister said at the start, to what he said today in the timid speech which we could hardly hear. He said this was a bill which carries forward the principles enunciated by the Prime Minister in July, 1965, but that it introduces flexibility without eroding the principles. We submit that two or three of the basic principles of this legislation have been eroded. We submit that there has been a retreat, and we submit that the change by one year, from July 1, 1967, to July 1, 1968, is not something the government can make light of. It is a betrayal of the pledged word; it is a turning down of the hopes of the people of Canada, and I submit it does damage not only to the party in power but to the whole political process.

There is time even yet for the government to review its decision because a good many people want to speak in this debate, and there is time to think it over. I plead with the government, not only in the name of the need of our people for medicare but in the name of our people's desire to have faith in parliament, in democracy and in the pledged word, that this bill be allowed to go through all its stages with the date that is now in it. Let us make it effective on July 1, 1967, so that we

[Mr. Knowles.]

can carry out the spirit expressed by the Minister of National Health and Welfare when he introduced this legislation on July 12, and I quote it again from page 7549 of *Hansard*:

The introduction of this resolution, Mr. Chairman, I believe marks an historic day for this parliament and for Canada. The program it spells out goes a long way toward closing the gap in our overall social security system. It is our hope it will result in the commencement of provincial medical care plans covering all Canadians on the 100th birthday of Confederation, July 1, 1967. This would be a most appropriate way to mark our birthday,—

I agree with what the minister said when he first brought in this legislation. I ask him to go back to it on second reading so that we really can celebrate our 100th birthday by having medicare in effect on July 1, 1967.

Mr. Speaker: The hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Caouette) is the next speaker.

[Translation]

If the hon. member for Villeneuve (Mr. Caouette) would now allow me to refer to an amendment moved earlier this afternoon—

[English]

However, I should first like to refer to the amendment moved by the hon. member for Simcoe East (Mr. Rynard), seconded by the hon. member for Brandon-Souris (Mr. Dinsdale). It was understood that the Chair would have an opportunity to look at this amendment and that hon. members would express their views thereon. I would be grateful to hon. members if they could let me have their views on the point of order, that is, whether or not this amendment is acceptable and in order.

• (5:20 p.m.)

Mr. MacEachen: I have a few comments to make about the regularity of the amendment. I begin by a reference to May's sixteenth edition, page 530, where the author specifies the features of a reasoned amendment in these words:

A reasoned amendment is placed on the paper in the form of a motion and may fall into one of several categories. It may be declaratory of some principle adverse to or differing from the principles, policy or provisions of the bill.

I believe this would be the only point that could be utilized to support the regularity of the amendment. I remind Your Honour that the amendment states that no legislation for the provision of insured medical care services in Canada will be satisfactory unless it, and I quote:

(a) secures co-operation of the governments of the provinces of Canada.