

*Medicare*

the workers, what they should do and what increases they should receive, but I have not heard any complaints from the Liberals about the action in the last few weeks and months of the doctors of Canada who have increased their fees in one fell swoop by 25 to 50 per cent. Newspapers of the last week end have reported that increases in doctors' fees in Ontario have been as high as 37 per cent. I presume that every member in this house received this morning a statement from the Seafarers' International Union regarding what is happening to their welfare and medicare plan. The increases are going into effect almost immediately.

Visits by doctors at a hospital have increased from \$3 to \$4, visits at the doctor's office have increased from \$4 to \$6 and visits elsewhere than at a doctor's office or at a hospital have increased from \$6 to \$8. The over-all increases amount to 25 to 50 per cent. They have gone away above the guide lines which the useful people of Canada, the workers, are supposed to follow according to this government. As a result of all these increases the average person cannot afford a single illness. That is why it is so necessary to have universal over-all medicare so that not only can the wealthy help the poor but so that the healthy can help the ill because the day can come to almost anyone when the healthy will become the ill.

The only interpretation I can give to the Conservative policy is that of medicare on the basis of a means test. Basically it is medicare for the needy and the indigent, but how many of them are there? The Conservatives have not mentioned how many needy and indigent there are. I was most interested to read this morning's newspaper report concerning an interview given by Dr. R. K. C. Thomson of Edmonton, president of the Canadian Medical Association. He does not like the government plan, nor does he like universal medicare. He agrees with the Tories, that is, he agrees with medicare on a means test basis. However, whilst the Tories do not state how many people would be affected according to Dr. Thomson the figures, 20 to 30 per cent of the population, or possibly 5 million people, require to be covered by a medical plan even on a means test basis because they cannot afford to pay for medical help and assistance.

I must say that the plan before us goes far beyond the indigent and far beyond those who definitely cannot afford to pay. The individual cost of medicare cannot be borne

[Mr. Winch.]

by 90 per cent of the people of Canada because it is such that one serious illness can bankrupt or put into serious debt any average working class family. A major illness today can run you into thousands of dollars, and I wonder how many working class people have \$1,000 in their bank accounts. Everybody needs medical protection, and we insist that this the only progressive policy that can be considered at this time.

So, Mr. Speaker, we support the bill as originally introduced. We support the principle of universal medicare and we want to see it go into effect as soon as possible and not later than July 1, 1967. We will do everything we can in the interest of the people of this country to see that this is done and to stop the reactionary Tories and Liberals from postponing the date of the commencement of the plan.

**Mr. Boulanger:** May I ask the hon. member a question? Has he read the last speech made by the Quebec leader of the New Democratic Party—I hope he knows who he is—Mr. Robert Cliche?

• (4:50 p.m.)

**Mr. Winch:** I have not read the last speech made by Mr. Cliche.

**Mr. Howard Johnston (Okanagan-Revelstoke):** Mr. Speaker, I have listened with a great deal of interest to the debate on medicare during the last few days and have also been interested in earlier statements made about it. Frequently it has been an exercise in Canadian political history with a Liberal government and the New Democratic Party in the opposition, striving very hard to indicate that each of them was very much in the forefront in staking out the original claim on the homestead of medicare. Admittedly many years have gone by, and I suppose there is nothing sadder to the original homesteaders than to find that the people who follow after them may not have quite the same high regard for the homestead as they had when it was originally staked out.

We have heard some rather surprising speeches today, particularly the one just completed by the hon. member for Vancouver East (Mr. Winch). Some members of this house must wonder just what the explanation is for some of these speeches. This afternoon I should like to give the house some explanation of the phenomenon that has been occurring. I am indebted to an interesting little book recently published called "The Elite In The Welfare State", which has a great deal to