

women of this country are convinced that for Canada the Pearson Government is the best in sight.

Some Hon. Senators: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Gershaw: Canada is described as a country with an eventful past, a prosperous present and a promising future; but with that there are certain very important problems to be met. One is the welfare problem, and I wish to speak particularly on one phase of that problem this afternoon.

May I say, first of all, that the welfare schemes in operation in Canada have proved a great blessing to many Canadians. To a great extent they have removed the fear of poverty, and they have brought happiness to many Canadian homes.

Hon. Mr. Roebuck: Hear, hear.

Hon. Mr. Gershaw: I do feel that medicare is a welfare problem, and I wish to place on record some of the resolutions that the Canadian Medical Association has passed regarding this important subject.

Senior officers of the Association have studied medicare, and it was mentioned in the address just recently delivered. They have studied the problem in Canada and in many other countries, and they have come to certain conclusions. Their organization is personally involved, and before any definite steps are taken these senior officers should be consulted and their findings should receive close attention.

Long ago, about 1933, the Medical Association accepted the principle of prepaid medical care, and at its annual meeting in 1960 the General Council expressed the following view:

The highest standard of medical services should be available to every resident in Canada regardless of age, state of health or financial status.

While there are certain aspects of medical services in which tax-supported programs are necessary, a tax-supported comprehensive program compulsory for all is neither necessary nor desirable.

In 1962 the following statement was issued as the belief of the medical profession in Canada:

Canadian doctors advocate plans of medical service insurance which provide for those who cannot pay, and leave those able to insure themselves the right to do so voluntarily.

Then, in March of this year the *Medical Journal* has the following to say:

A common feature of the reports of our three Special Committees is the acceptance of our belief: "Certain individuals require assistance to pay medical insurance costs." In each of these reports reference is made to the needs of the indigent, the marginal economic class and the self-supporting majority. We have stated our conviction that it is possible and feasible to identify persons on the basis of their economic situation and consequent ability to pay and we have asserted that it is the responsibility of our governments to assist those in need to the extent of their need. It follows that we do not consider it necessary for governments to introduce a compulsory tax-supported system of medical services insurance and we have declared this to be "neither necessary nor desirable."

That resolution was adopted.

In any tax-supported or compulsory comprehensive scheme the funds would come from a single source and, consequently, there would be a great temptation for those responsible for raising the money to restrict the benefits or make other changes, which would be most undesirable.

In Alberta the system works differently. They have a great number of carriers who will sell medical coverage: they have the doctors' own organization, Medical Services Incorporated; they have a number of health organizations; and they have a great number of insurance organizations—all selling medical insurance coverage. So, the element of competition enters into it. The Government fixes a maximum premium. The premium for one person must not be more than \$36 a year, for two persons, a man and wife, not more than \$84 a year, and for a family never more than \$144 a year.

There are 1,400,000 people in Alberta, of which 1,100,000 have some form of prepaid medical insurance. Also, the province helps out. For instance, it pays half the premium of a person whose income is so low it is not taxable under the Income Tax Act. The Government will pay \$18 a year for a single person, \$42 a year for a man and wife, and \$72 a year for a family. Then, if a resident has a taxable income of not more than \$500 a year the Government will pay about one-quarter of the premium; that is, \$9 for a single person, \$21 for a married couple, and \$36 for a family. There are in Alberta 300,000