

*Medicare*

Bill No. C-227, more especially about its basic principles.

First of all, according to the principles of this bill, there are in Canada people without the money required to pay their doctors' bills. Provision has been made for an insurance to protect the Canadian people against the risks of illness and to pay their medical costs.

Mr. Speaker, how is it that in a country as rich as Canada, some people are so poor. How is it that Canadians are unable to pay their doctors' bills? It is surely because the present system is faulty or unbalanced, because the citizens are supposed to be able to look after their own needs. They should be able to pay their bills, their doctor, their food, their rent, but under the present system, not a single one is able to pay his rent, his doctor and everything. We are living under a credit system. Everybody borrows money from lending companies and our system has become so absurd—it is almost entirely planned—that the people are no longer able to meet the very requirements of the programs we set up.

The costs of a good number of our plans are paid by workers or employers. Employers and workers are no longer able to pay compulsory fees with respect to different cost sharing plans between the federal and provincial governments.

Mr. Speaker, in a country such as Canada, it is illogical to have to advocate compulsory plans which are going to bind individuals, which prevent the taxpayer from saving a few cents or a few dollars but provide all kinds of ways of emptying his pockets. It is desired to implement such a medicare plan and all possible means are resorted to in order to introduce it, knowing that a great majority of the people in Canada will be unable to pay for it. It is compulsory. Everybody is compelled to do something; every one is being cast in a mould and has to go through it; those who are working are compelled to pay, they are being robbed so that we may give something to those who are not working. A great percentage of the people are unemployed at present. There are pockets of unemployment at present in Canada. A great number of citizens who are fit for work are living off social welfare plans and their names do not appear on the unemployment insurance rolls. And we are told there is a decrease in unemployment in Canada, and that prosperity is taking over in this country.

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It is not prosperity that is taking over but poverty. If we have to talk about such plans, to try to set up plans of this kind, it is because you agree there is poverty in Canada.

A few months ago, a war was declared on poverty and now, we have declared war against the poor. Instead of fighting poverty, we are doing the opposite. In discussing these various resounding plans, several members of parliament have just begun to realize how worthless they are.

This particular plan is of no use; the people do not want it. First, it is a provincial matter, because education and health matters are under the jurisdiction of provinces, according to the British North America Act. Give to the provinces the right to administer themselves and let them take care of themselves. Let us not infringe on the rights of the provinces.

That is the reason why, Mr. Speaker, we will vote against the motion and against the amendment moved by the Conservatives, which is meaningless. It is merely restrictive in nature.

The principle of the plan is accepted, but it is not to be implemented now. However, if it is not to be implemented now, why present it to the people? Why present it to parliament for debate, why put in forward, if it is not to be implemented? When something is not to be put into effect, it is not talked about, it is put aside. It is talked about only if it is to be put into force. But now they want to socialize Canada and the whole Canadian economy. This medicare legislation exemplifies one of the great principles of socialism.

• (5:20 p.m.)

Mr. Speaker, almost all salaried workers are insured through group insurance plans. Almost all organizations and corporations, and several individuals in the field of production and consumption and in several other fields, have group insurance. Participation in these group insurance plans is not compulsory for the workers. All manufacturers and corporations having these group insurance plans offer them to their employees who are free to join them. Those who want to, join, and those who do not want to, do not join. The Minister of National Health and Welfare should follow the suggestion and we should have free participation. Yes, we are in favour of insurance plans. Yes, we care about the welfare of the people. We want the people to have an adequate standard of living in a country abounding with such riches. We want the people to benefit from medical and hospital services and from all possible care. Yes,