

*Medicare*

[Translation]

Well now, if the only result achieved by the doctor's brief were to warn the government and the medical profession of this danger, his essay will at least have done this much. Surely the government is not launching such legislation without being aware that a sufficient number of well-trained medical practitioners will be needed. And moreover, other pieces of legislation show us that the government is taking other steps to provide for greater expansion of medical research, and also of professional schools that are turning out competent physicians. Therefore, it is taking the necessary steps to fill in this gap and I submit that the learned doctor's objections are—if we interpret them in the right way—arguments which could be made in favour of the medical care plan.

I also went through certain briefs submitted by the Canadian Medical Association. I find that their recommendations are much more reasonable, much more realistic than those of the Western University professor. As I understand them, their suggestions to the government boil down to this: medical care services should be restricted to those who are unable to pay for them. They would also like to see provincial governments dealing with the known bona fide organizations, such as insurance companies, or others, a provision obviously not included in the present bill.

But I see that, by and large, the Canadian Medical Association has no objection to the bill itself, and they simply want to protect the particular interests of the medical profession or some companies.

I have heard other objections, Mr. Chairman, and I would like to sum up what my friend, the hon. member for Villeneuve, said last night in four or five speeches, voicing the opinion of some other members of the opposition for extended coverage of the medical plan. But he strongly stressed the point that the federal government was interfering in the affairs of the provinces, that it dictated to the provinces. I was astounded. With his usual exuberance, his usual power of persuasion, he railed so much against the government for several minutes that an inexperienced member would leave this debate convinced that the government is a real tyrant bent on destroying what we call in my part of the country the autonomy of the provinces.

I do not see it that way, Mr. Chairman. I see in this bill, as well as in most social legislation passed here, not federal interference but what I would call federal leadership. The federal government has launched across the country social movements and social legislation which benefit the whole population and which each province would be slow to put into effect had the federal government not given this leadership which is an inspiration and stimulus for all the provinces.

I believe that this is the role of the government, but I do not believe the government dictates, commands or imposes anything on the provinces. I have read the bill for the tenth time and I still see that the provinces will administer the plan, make the decisions and receive money from the federal government.

There are, of course, four clauses, and everyone knows what they are: portability, universal coverage, public administration and universality. I think that the government thus wanted to insure uniformity in the provinces, and I feel that is essential.

If, as Canadians, we live today in Quebec and decide tomorrow to move to Saskatchewan or Ontario, we will be able, at a few days' notice, to move to western or eastern Canada and benefit from that legislation. It is important, therefore, that the main characteristics of that bill at least should be made uniform, and I think the government did the right thing. Who will be able to object to portability?

• (5:30 p.m.)

Universal coverage, of course, because if it is necessary to make an investigation each time people need medical services, they might die sometimes before the investigation is completed. Therefore it is good that the coverage should be universal.

Public administration, of course, since companies must not be left free to make money out of public funds and there is a greater guarantee that no abuse will result from those measures if the province continues to administer the plan.

Universality, of course, it is a striking feature. I do not think, once again, that those clauses are liable to be considered as interfering with the administration of the province. Besides, if they do, I think that it is fortunate and I even feel like repeating what an American patriot said: "If this be treason, make the most of it."