

Canada Health Act

officer, preventing that person, having met all of those criteria, from practising.

● (1150)

I recall, Mr. Speaker, that during the First Ministers debate on the Constitution but, more important, in the committee of officials during that summer when various amendments were considered, one of the areas which was most thorny was the so-called mobility rights clause. While there was a strong argument that Canadians should have the right to move from one province to another, from a province to a territory or from a territory to a province, without impediment or internal barriers, there was a concern expressed as well that provinces which had a provincial unemployment rate greater than the national average should have some means whereby they could provide for employment or economic activity which, if not totally protecting their citizens, would give them some access to the jobs available. For example, in Atlantic Canada there is a recognized provision—although not in the Constitution—whereby contractors in one Province have a 10 per cent advantage over contractors from another Province.

In fact, Mr. Speaker, the federal Government did the same thing in the Territories. It is interesting to note, when one looks at some agreements in principle on Indian land claims, in what direction those kinds of provisions will go. That is not as yet a very clear concept. However, there was a general agreement in principle that Canadians, if they met the qualifications, should have the right, with no internal barriers, to practise their profession or trade in any province in Canada. What this amendment then addresses is that, having met the qualifications, those persons should not only have the right to practise within the plan but should not be barred from practising within any province if they have met the criteria.

If there is a problem of distribution of medical personnel, Mr. Speaker, and some people argue there is, I would think that the matter is better addressed through positive incentives. For example, the Province of Ontario, as well as other provinces, has had this kind of plan. In the Northwest Territories and the Yukon there has been a northern allowance. While some of us might argue that the northern allowance is not adequate, and there has been some argument in terms of whether it should be taxable—and we have fought the Minister of Finance (Mr. Lalonde) time after time on that—the fact remains that a positive incentive would bring more harmony into the profession and would attract people to practise in geographical areas in which otherwise they might not be as interested. This clause, Mr. Speaker, attempts to address that exact question, and I commend it to the House for approval.

Mr. Jim Hawkes (Calgary West): Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak for a few moments in particular on Motion No. 2. I sat in the House and listened to the Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacLellan) indicate the Government's intention not to support Motion No. 2, and I was disturbed by it. The reason given by the Parliamentary Secretary seemed to centre on the issue of provincial jurisdiction. The tone of that intervention was such

that the Liberal Government was trying to paint itself as a group which paid proper attention to provincial jurisdiction.

I believe that anyone who looks at the record of the Government in this Chamber over a four-year period of time would be inevitably drawn to the conclusion that if there has ever been a Government in the history of this nation which did not pay attention to the issue of provincial jurisdiction, surely it is the present Liberal Government. That kind of excuse for not supporting the motion rings particularly hollow on this day.

Motion No. 2 is a motion designed to ensure the equal right of all well trained medical practitioners to participate in the health insurance scheme of this country. Years ago, the provinces invited the federal Government into the manpower jurisdiction when they gave the federal Government the power to deal with unemployment insurance in this country. It is a responsibility of this Chamber and of the federal Government, and a legitimate one, to be concerned about manpower issues in this country. We must make sure that we have an adequately trained work force to do the kinds of things which need doing in this country.

When it comes to health care generally, Mr. Speaker, it is inconceivable that we can have a decent system of health care in this country without professionally trained people willing to provide that kind of service to their fellow Canadians. The health care system is composed of facilities, but what really makes it work is the people within them. We heard earlier this day, Mr. Speaker, that it takes between six and ten years education beyond high school before these medical practitioners are properly trained and ready to start their careers. As we look at this Canada Health Act, Mr. Speaker, and this amendment today, one of the questions every Hon. Member of this Chamber should ask himself about each and every clause in this Bill is, what is the impact of a particular clause on the mind-set of young people in this country who are trying to make a career decision? We should not have a clause or a set of words in this Act which says to the young people in this country that they should not really consider a career in the health care profession because it may turn out to be a bad career. In particular, without Motion No. 2, which was moved by the Hon. Member for Oxford (Mr. Halliday), we can see clearly that this Bill says to the eighteen-year-olds in this country that they should really stop to think about whether they want to invest ten years of their lives in a training process because it may happen that, at the end of ten years, some government somewhere in this country will say to them, "It is nice that you took those ten years of training, but we will not allow you to participate as a useful citizen in the health care of this country". In the absence of this amendment, Mr. Speaker, that is what we are saying to the brightest eighteen-year-olds in this country. We are saying, "Do not take a chance. Do not be willing to risk ten years of your time and your money to get yourself well trained, because somewhere, some day some group of politicians is going to say to you that you cannot make a living practising what you have learned".