

In my view it is deplorable that we should pass a language bill on the one hand and on the other destroy any opportunity for equality of the health and well-being of thousands of Canadians. I do not think there is any justification for this. Once the Canadian people realize what is going on they will not be slow in making their feelings felt about medicare.

This trend is not new. When I heard the hon. member on the government side who preceded the last speaker refer to this subject I wished he had looked up some of the records in the history books of this country. He would find that a former minister of labour, when he had the plight of the unemployed people drawn to his attention, made the statement that it was quite impossible to put the unemployed to work, that it would bankrupt the country and would cost millions of dollars. He said we could not afford to do anything to prevent people from rotting in idleness. Adolf Hitler did, by making us go to war. When war was declared, we discovered that in a country which could not afford to keep the young people working, happy and well, where there was no money to provide a decent civilian job for our young citizens, we could spend \$28,000 to train an aeroplane pilot and \$25,000 to train a navigator, as many of them as we needed. We could also find sufficient money for war equipment and defence because, we knew we had to find it.

I find that a great many people in this house—I see some of them in front of me and some to the side of me—do not know yet that we have to plan for a healthy and industrial population, for a population that has some faith in this country, or else we shall have to pay a price that no country can afford. If we do not pay the price of keeping people healthy through medicare we will not have a healthy population, because a very large percentage of our people are not able to bear the costs of their own medical bills. If we allow our population to suffer poor health and misery we shall find ourselves in a situation similar to that which is to be found among the Indians, whose health standards are desperately trying to improve and bring up to the standard of the rest of the country. Although our health standard is far above that of the Indian people, it too is in jeopardy today because of the attempt to kill the medicare program.

If we can afford to look after people in their old age, we could also save in medicare costs by giving people enough to live on, and remain self respecting. Surely we are not in

Supply—National Health and Welfare

such desperate straits as to say, as some hon. members have said in effect today, that we cannot afford to care for sick people in Canada, that there is just not enough money to look after them, that those people who can afford to pay for a doctor can keep well, but let the other people stay sick or in a state of ill health indefinitely. We have heard some hon. members say today, in effect, that we cannot afford to look after old people: Let us sweep them under rug or put them away somewhere, where it will cost very little and thus rid ourselves of the whole problem, because we cannot afford to give them enough to live on. When I hear people complaining about the enormity and atrocity of asking for pensions of \$125 a month I am reminded of the Canadian welfare council which said three years ago that the minimum on which a single individual could live in health and decency was \$138 a month.

Surely members of parliament should not be abdicating their responsibility in this fashion, because if they do, then they are betraying the trust which was put in them by the electors of this country. It is true that we have in our ridings many affluent taxpayers, but there is not one of us here who has not also large numbers of people in his constituency who depend on what we can do co-operatively through medicare, old age security and other forms of social security.

I say that some of us here are not asking for anything out of the way. We are simply saying that, either we have a government which will ensure that people will have what they need in the way of social security, and which will ensure that we have the industry for the gross national product necessary to finance these measures, or else we must resign ourselves to a divided population half healthy and half sick, half free and half slave. I do not think there is any way around that equation. I, for one, am not going to try to shove Canada back into the nineteenth century. There are too many people who want to do just that; but some of us have to try to keep moving forward, toward the goal which most people want.

● (4:30 p.m.)

I was interested in one member from the other side who said that this party seems to have a lot of experts in such matters as health and welfare. We are not experts. However, we have a lot of people who are concerned about people and the things that people need. We believe that these things should have a high priority. It is all very well