

*Borrowing Authority*

about the economic system known as capitalism. In that development we saw fantastic growth. In terms of the productive capacity of the human society there had been nothing like it in the past. Also we saw human beings relegated to being merely instruments of the market itself. Then we saw great collections of poverty. We saw people left out entirely. As a result there was the response about which I am talking in the 19th Century. Gradually it was said that we should not leave our children to the market. In the history of every European country child labour laws were passed. They became universal. There was the quaint notion that people under a certain age had to be protected by laws in society and that the market should not interfere with their lives.

Also we saw a radical notion during that period. Elementary education was deemed to be an essential social right. It was to be universally available, not simply a right of the rich. It was to be made available to every child in society. It was argued then, why we should provide public schools? Of course, in England public schools were really private ones. However, it was said that what we call public schools were unnecessary for the rich because they could afford to create their own. At one point it was finally said that the state should provide schools for the poor. At that point the classic debate, in my judgment, began to be joined. It began to be argued that we should create an elementary system of education. That took place in this country as well. It was a system financed by public taxes which was not only available to the poor, but was a universally available elementary education system for rich, poor and middle-income Canadians.

Returning to the history of our own country, lo and behold, rich, poor and middle-income children have by and large attended the same schools. We took that out of the market. We said that it was part of what it meant to grow up and be Canadian.

I will jump through a lot of history now and come to the past few decades. There was a gradual evolution by which we took more things out of the market and left many things, appropriately, to the market. We took some things out and said that we should redefine our nation of citizenship. The Leader of the Opposition was absolutely right when he said that Liberal Governments introduced these programs. They were in power. However, he would also acknowledge that in the main it was the predecessors of my Party in the CCF who led the debate. First they forced the debate for pensions. Then they led the debate for medicare and in a number of other benefits. I do not want to be presumptuous or ridiculous by suggesting that members of other Parties were not involved. Of course they were, but they were in the minority. They eventually became the majority in the Liberal Party which governed at that time.

The arguments we heard in the past were exactly what we are hearing now from those who want to dismantle these programs—that pensions were not needed for everyone, that they were only needed for the poor or those who really could not look after themselves. Small “c” and big “c” Conservatives of the day were persuaded that maybe it should be a universal

right, not just relegated to the poor. Then came medicare, and I remember the arguments when I was relatively young. I remember Conservative arguments—they were coming from Liberals as well—in Saskatchewan asking why we needed state medicare. Originally they suggested that medicare should be provided as a charity for those who could not obtain medical care. They indicated that the rich could afford it and asked why we should have it. Eventually, not only a majority of my Party but the majority of other Parties came to accept the idea that we should change the market mechanism and that what it meant to grow up in a decent society was to have something like a pension, a medical plan or elementary education as a matter of right for all Canadians.

That was the key argument of my Party in the past, it is today and will be in the future. Our view of the universality principle is that there are certain goods and benefits of society to which all Canadians are entitled. Whether one is a banker, a cab driver, a logger or whatever occupation, whether one works inside or outside the home, all Canadians contribute and all Canadians should have them.

**Some Hon. Members:** Hear, hear!

**Mr. Broadbent:** It is part of our ongoing definition of what it means to have a civilized concept of citizenship. It is a concept in which my Party believes profoundly.

I should like to give three quick arguments in favour of the principle of universality. First, the universality principle is not simply a matter of dollars and cents. I want to underline that. In the most sketchy fashion something has been said about the history of humanity from the medieval period to the present. It was sketchy indeed, but the principles involved—

**Mr. Turner (Vancouver Quadra):** Mr. Speaker, I rise on a point of order. There may be an inclination to allow the Leader of the New Democratic Party, the Hon. Member for Oshawa (Mr. Broadbent), to continue his speech, which will last only 10 more minutes if Your Honour will not see the clock.

● (1300)

**Mr. Epp (Provencher):** That is correct, Mr. Speaker. I understand that when the Leader of the New Democratic Party has concluded, we will adjourn for lunch and reconvene at two o'clock, at which time I intend to take up the debate.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** I gather there is unanimous consent?

**Some Hon. Members:** Agreed.

**Mr. Deputy Speaker:** Very well.

**Mr. Broadbent:** Mr. Speaker, I begin by thanking my colleagues, the Leader of the Opposition and the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Epp), for their consideration. I want to say publicly what I have already said to the Minister, that I deeply regret that I will not be able to be here for his contribution to this important debate because of another commitment.