

Medicare

to certain of the recommendations it contained. This is the last recommendation they put before the Hall Commission:

In conclusion, and inasmuch as any medical care plan would have to be integrated with and would affect and be affected by the hospital insurance plan, we would urge, based on our own experience, that federal legislation should be sufficiently general—

Let me repeat that:

—should be sufficiently general—

That is what the minister's own provincial government said to the Hall Commission. They said, further:

—and flexible that a province would be able to develop and implement a plan that meets their individual needs.

The government of the province from which the minister comes said to the Hall Commission that if a medicare program is to be implemented, it will be affected by the hospital insurance plan and should be sufficiently general and flexible that a province would be able to develop and implement a plan that would meet their individual needs. Well, Mr. Speaker, let us analyse what they really said here. I would emphasize the fact that this is what the government of the minister's province is saying. They are saying—and this is back in 1961 or 1962 when the Hall Commission was studying this whole question—that a national medicare plan, if brought into being, would affect and be affected by the hospital insurance plan. That is a logical rationalization. What did they say about the hospital insurance plan? They said, "We will not catch up with the demand for hospital beds until 1975." They also recommended that the federal government make larger grants toward the provision of hospital construction. Why has not legislation in respect of this recommendation been introduced first?

If provinces across Canada say, "We will not have enough beds for our foreseeable needs until 1975", and they complain that the \$2,000 per bed grant of this government is not sufficient, why has not legislation to improve this situation been introduced before medicare? Why do we not say, "Yes, we realize that there is a shortage of hospital beds and that the federal government grant of \$2,000 per bed is not enough. We realize that we should increase this grant"? I think the grant should be doubled. Why does not this legislation come first? The minister's province is considered to be one of the areas of Canada not too generously endowed with

natural resources. That province is not nearly as generously endowed with natural resources as is the part of Canada from which I come. Why do we not increase this grant before bringing in medicare legislation? It appears to me that this would be a logical rationalization of the facts available to us. This is what the province of the minister recommended to the Hall Commission. What did they say in their brief? They said:

We would urge, based on our own experience, that federal legislation should be sufficiently general and flexible that a province would be able to develop and implement a plan that meets their individual needs.

Let us see how this legislation meets that criterion which they urge upon the federal government, no matter who is in power at the time. Is this legislation sufficiently general and flexible to meet their needs? I can only say no. It lays down four criteria and says, "You must meet these four criteria or there is no money for you." I come back, Mr. Speaker, to the central theme of my speech: Where, oh where, is co-operative federalism in this particular piece of legislation?

Let us look a little further at the recommendations they made to the Hall Commission. They said that federal legislation should be sufficiently general and flexible that a province would be able to develop a plan that would meet their individual needs. Does this plan allow the provinces to develop a plan which will meet their own needs? It does not. It gives the provinces no choice whatsoever. It says, "Boom. This is to be the plan which you will operate. A criterion is that 90 per cent of all the citizens within a province shall participate." On page 3 of the bill other criteria are laid out. Where is the flexibility? Where does this plan allow a province to develop a plan to meet its individual needs? It does not. This plan does not even interest itself in the individual needs that a province may desire to meet.

The plan envisaged in this bill keeps a heavy hand on the money with respect to all provinces. Even the province of Alberta runs short of money once in a while. All provinces find themselves short of money as does every municipality, and especially the municipalities in the province of Alberta. I ask again, Mr. Speaker: Where, of where, is co-operative federalism in this legislation? I have searched this legislation and hoped that somewhere along the line this would not be the new interpretation of co-operative federalism. I hoped that we would not hold a club