

Supply—Health and Welfare

number of the medical profession in Britain were against it. The Canadian Press reported, one, that British doctors have full clinical freedom; two, the British medical profession has progressed under the state-run health service. Many medical men testified that the family doctor has preserved his independence, that the relationship between doctor and patient has been maintained or even improved.

Dr. H. A. Clegg, who holds the very influential position of editor of the British Medical Association's journal, stated this:

No thoughtful British doctor would think for one moment of abandoning the national health service.

In answer to a critic who said the British doctors had lost prestige, Dr. Clegg declared this according to the newspaper reports, and it is also in quotation marks:

"That is a completely misleading and a highly-biased statement by someone who has a deeply-rooted prejudice against a national health service."

These remarks among many indicate on the whole that the British plan, from the point of view of those who opposed it originally, is a success. All agreed that improvements are being made and will continue to be made. But the plan has been tried, tested and found useful, successful and beneficial. I may say that this confirms my own personal opinion formed during a prolonged visit to Britain last year and in 1948. In 1948 there was a great deal of misinformation in Britain itself as to what was being done. Six years later it was not only understood but warmly approved by people of all types and all social levels.

I think it is appalling that in this day and age many thousands of Canadians fear the costs both of consulting a doctor and particularly of undergoing hospital treatment, when it might be most beneficial. May I say that medical costs and costs of consulting a doctor have just increased. I am not criticizing that. Everything else has gone up, and the medical profession is entitled to its fees. But I say that these fees which are now in effect cannot be paid, as Dr. Gregoire said, by 80 per cent of the people of this country, and the time has come when we have to face up to the situation.

I know it is said the cost will be great. Well, the last estimate I heard of the costs was very much higher than it was in 1945, of course. I think the minister said last year it was something in excess of \$600 million, but today the bureau of statistics tells us that the Canadian people are expending \$675 million.

Mr. Martin: It is \$840 million.

[Mr. Coldwell.]

Mr. Coldwell: I had not seen that last figure.

Mr. Martin: The hon. member is correct. The figure I gave in 1951 was brought up to date a few days ago, and it is now \$840 million.

Mr. Coldwell: All right. Of course if that is true, then we have to increase correspondingly the amount of \$675 million that I have just given. If the Canadian people were spending that amount, they will be spending at least as much as the cost of the health plan today, and getting very inadequate service for it. Yet if we have full coverage for everybody, even if it costs \$1 billion, I want to say that we quite willingly appropriate an average of \$2 billion a year for national defence. I am not denying that has been necessary, but I am saying that the best form of defence this country or any other country can have is a healthy and vigorous population. We found in the last war that when young men came to volunteer for service overseas over 50 per cent were turned down because they were not physically up to the standards required for overseas service in the first part of the war. Therefore I say it is the best means of defence.

Mr. Martin: I know the hon. member wants to be fair. I did not want to interrupt him earlier. I just want him to know that the statement he referred to in the quotation from the paper is one I have since twice denied. I never said it was necessary to have all the provinces.

Mr. Coldwell: I am very glad to hear that, because I was quoting from the *Globe and Mail*.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Coldwell: But I have also a similar quotation from the Saskatoon *Star-Phoenix*. That is a Canadian Press dispatch. So you see the two papers, one with its staff correspondents there and the other using a Canadian Press dispatch, both quoted the minister to the same effect. I am very happy to have his denial, because it will help materially to dissipate the idea that we have to wait until the last of the most backward of the provinces comes into the field of health insurance.

I mentioned Saskatchewan. I could have mentioned Alberta and British Columbia which, of course, also have plans for hospitalization covering in one way or another the people of those provinces. And even under the former commission government in Newfoundland they had a plan, though I believe it