

Income Tax Act

resolution stated that it would not deprive the treasury of any material amount. That may be so. I have no figures and I have not heard any as to what amount might be lost. None the less I think we should assume that if the resolution is to provide any substantial relief a substantial amount will be lost to the federal treasury. I think we must keep that in mind in weighing the benefits of this resolution.

Many of these policies for sickness and accident insurance provide not only for the payment of actual out of pocket expenses but for a guarantee of income. Of course it is not suggested that this income should not be subject to income tax, but the premium a man pays contains in part a provision for insurance against that loss of income. I think that factor should be carefully considered.

As I say, we must remember that this would constitute a drain upon the federal treasury. Possibly the chief objection I have to the resolution and the amendment at the present time is in the timing. As we all know, the federal government has proposed a sweeping nation-wide scheme of health insurance which is under consideration by the various provinces. Undoubtedly that is going to be of the greatest benefit to the people of this country. Unfortunately it is also going to cost the taxpayers of this country an extremely large amount of money. I think the estimated figure was \$180 million, but the mover of the resolution mentioned a sum of \$182 million. If past experience in these matters is any criterion it is most likely that the amount will be even higher than has been estimated. Consequently I do not think this is the time when this measure should be adopted by the house.

We do not know what effect the health insurance scheme when it is finally put into definite form and comes into force will have upon the various private schemes for sickness or accident insurance, or indeed upon any provincial health insurance scheme which is now in effect. It may very well be that when our dominion-wide health insurance scheme comes into effect we will find that things are not as visualized by the movers of the resolution and the amendment. It may be found that the need for this resolution has been largely done away with by the coming into force of the national health insurance scheme.

As I said before, this motion taken as a matter of theory naturally has a great deal to commend it, and I should like to congratulate the mover upon his presentation of the case. I know that he has at heart the welfare of the people it is proposed to

benefit. Nevertheless, in view of the imminence of our national health insurance scheme and the probable cost of that scheme to the taxpayers of this country I repeat that I do not think this is the proper time for the house to approve this measure.

Mr. Colin Cameron (Nanaimo): Mr. Speaker, after listening to the hon. member who has just resumed his seat I have come to the conclusion that he is a victim of semantics. Because the government has persistently referred to its proposed or projected measure as health insurance the hon. member appears to think it is really a health insurance plan, when of course it is an extremely limited plan covering only hospitalization. If he would refer to the resolution before us he would see that it relates specifically, among other things, to medical expenses which would not be affected in any way by the hospitalization scheme which the federal government is said to be considering and which the Liberal party of course has been considering for over 37 years. The main thing is that it certainly will not cover the expenses that are referred to in this resolution.

An hon. Member: How do you know?

Mr. Cameron (Nanaimo): Because we have been told that it is going to be a hospitalization scheme when it comes through, in spite of the government's persistent reference to it as a health insurance scheme, a very bad misuse of words in my opinion.

There were two comments made this afternoon by my fellow British Columbian, the hon. member for Victoria (Mr. Fairey), to which I should like to refer. The first was the question of estimating the amount that is paid on behalf of a citizen of British Columbia by the government of British Columbia under the present hospitalization scheme in that province. As the hon. member pointed out, in British Columbia hospitalization is financed by an increase in the sales tax from 3 per cent to 5 per cent. While it is true that the funds for paying these hospital bills are derived from the sales tax, nevertheless I think—the hon. member can correct me if I am wrong, or any other British Columbia member can do the same—it will be found that the scheme is still operated technically as a hospitalization insurance scheme, and that the administration of the hospitalization insurance plan is provided with a sum of money by the government which is an actuarial estimate of what would have been paid into the fund by the citizens of British Columbia had the old premium scheme been maintained.