

increase social security measures. The more basic things that people need which are paid for on an insurance basis or by the government, the more you cope with these problems that face our people.

I submit that at this time when the high cost of living and the problems of living on low incomes are pressing on our people, the one thing that should be at the top of the list is the institution of medicare. Instead of putting the date off until July 1, 1968, the minister should have the foresight and determination to stand up and say that he wants this date advanced at least to January 1, 1967.

The people of this country find that increased medical bills make things more difficult for them. People have to mortgage their future to get the medical attention they need, and many people have to go without medical attention. Those who suffer in this way will know that the aggregation to blame is the Liberal party, because it is the Liberal party which is imposing this callous treatment on Canada at the present time.

• (5:10 p.m.)

The third reason that I cited for declaring this to be a sad day in the history of Canada and of parliament is that this kind of performance is a reflection not only on the Minister of National Health and Welfare and the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Marchand), as well as the hon. members for Hamilton East and York-Scarborough and those who believe in the present need for medicare but are not prepared to go with it, not just a reflection on the Liberal government and the Liberal party, but in the eyes of the country it is a reflection on parliament, on politics and on democracy itself. All of us suffer as a result of it. Never mind the fact that maybe the rest of us in this house suffer these criticisms unfairly; the real concern is that this does damage to the confidence and to the faith of our people in the democratic process. On thing people have a right to expect out of the political process is integrity and dependability.

For 47 years we have had promises from the Liberal party. Nothing could have been more firm than what was promised by them in last year's campaign, but it has now been thrown out the window. I submit that those on the side of the government who like to make speeches about the importance of parliament and about keeping up the image of parliament have a chance to do something if

they will keep their word on this very important matter. These are the three main reasons that I give for suggesting this is a sad day in Canadian history.

Medicare

May I spell out for a moment or two the other point on which I said I would dwell, namely, that in the eyes of the Canadian people the myth about the Liberal party is at long last being exploded. We have been told for decades that the Liberals are the party of labour, that they are the party of social welfare and progress. The record is clear on the kind of pressures that were necessary to get any action out of the Liberal party, but the fact of the matter is that it was 47 years ago, as recorded in the book reporting the 1919 convention, that the Liberal party hoisted to the top of the flagpole its pledge for old age pensions, unemployment insurance and medicare.

It was in 1927, eight years later, that the first old age pension legislation was put into effect in this country. It was in 1940, 21 years later, that unemployment insurance came into effect, and it looks now as though it will be a full 50 years before medicare is put into effect in this country. The hon. member for Peace River (Mr. Baldwin) says it may be 100 years. Surely, Mr. Speaker, that tells the Canadian people that it is a myth, a hoax, a delusion to presume that the Liberal party is a party of progress or of liberal ideas. I do not wonder that the Liberals have had trouble during their convention in the last few days. The fact that they have papered over the cracks and given emotional ovations to their leader does not hide the uneasiness on the part of some of them over there who do have liberal ideas; they realize they cannot count on their party to go ahead with the policies their leaders say they believe in.

Mr. Speaker, we are not only faced with delay in medicare but also with the time it has taken this government to bring in the labour legislation. Now we have the old age pension issue all over again. It took years to get rid of the means test, but this government is talking about increasing the old age pension and attaching a means test to it. It is turning back the clock, and therefore the Liberal party is not a party of progress but a party of retrogression. Somehow it maintains itself in the country on the strength of the argument that it holds the country together. It does all it can do to hold itself together, but perhaps out of this the country may realize, as Peter Newman said on television