

*Medicare*

That is quite an interesting statement. It would almost appear that this bill is just another routine matter in the house that it is a short bill and does not require a great deal of study, that having been introduced it will be carried forward without too much difficulty. I would refer the house to the description of this bill:

An act to authorize the payment of contributions by Canada towards the cost of insured medical care services incurred by provinces pursuant to provincial medical care insurance plans.

I do not think too many of us in the house object to the philosophy that if the provinces are willing to bring forward medical care insurance plans the federal government should assist them to do so. However, one section of the bill provides that the plan must be universal. It was rather interesting that when the minister introduced the resolution preceding the bill he spent so much time trying to convince us that the universality of the plan did not mean compulsion; it did not mean that everybody in Canada would have to participate. I maintain that if the minister would see fit to revise the idea of compulsion, which will interfere with the freedom of the provinces, the freedom of the individual and the freedom of the doctors, there would be very little doubt that we in this house could come to general agreement on the question of medicare.

I do not think there is a person in the house who is not in favour of medicare of some kind and its being made available to all Canadians. Such plans are available in the provinces at the present time. There are private plans in which people can participate; there are co-operative plans and plans of all kinds under which people can receive medical attention. As the hon. member for Bow River (Mr. Woolliams) mentioned, very many of the organizations in this country, labour unions, manufacturers, teachers, doctors and small businessmen have medicare available to them. I am very proud of the fact that co-operative medical services plans are operated in the two counties I represent. I refer to the Wellington County Co-operative Medical Association plan and the Huron County Medical Co-operative Services plan. These two organizations have done a tremendous job in providing economical and serviceable medical care to all those within the area who wish to avail themselves of these services. I too, am interested in those people faced with critical illnesses which might use up their entire financial resources. In our

province there is a medical care program which pretty well prevents this situation developing.

It is rather interesting to hear other people, particularly members of this house, indicating that people are just crying out for this type of a poll taken by a newspaper, *The Independent Businessman*. I am a small businessman and receive this newspaper and am probably more interested in it than some people. However, I was very interested in the results of the poll taken on the question of medicare. This newspaper is read by 100,000 small businessmen in Ontario. I do not know how wide its circulation is throughout the nation but it has over 100,000 readers in our province. In answer to the question, "Do you approve of medicare," only 27 per cent of these people indicated in the "yes" column that they were interested in this type of program. On the "no" side 68 per cent of the people said they were not interested in medicare, and only 5 per cent of the people polled had no opinion.

Therefore it is difficult to accept the statement that a great mass of people are clamouring at the doors of the parliament buildings asking members to bring forward this piece of legislation to relieve them of their medical cares and financial responsibilities in this connection. Apparently this is not true. In talking to my constituents over the holiday about medicare I found that a great many of them said, "I think it is about time the government quit participating in our business and let us look after ourselves. We are sick and tired of the big clubs that are held over our heads saying that we have to participate in pension plans, we have to participate in medicare, and so on." This is a popular feeling in Canada today. People are sick and tired of these social security programs. They are beginning to realize that there is no pie in the sky, that the money for these programs does not grow on trees and somebody has to pay for them. If more people realized that I think they would come to the doors of the Liberal government and say; "Take another look at this piece of legislation and see whether there are so many people interested in it."

● (4:50 p.m.)

In the same connection it is rather interesting to read what a very famous senator who retired a few months ago said about this