

*Medicare*

something down the throats of the people that they do not want. When I was a child I was given a certain type of medicine—and I think you all know what it was because it was given on a big spoon. We did not like it, but we took it because we had to have the ailment that was bothering us fixed up. We took it whether we liked it or not: This was compulsion. I suggest there are other things on the market, such as little chocolate pills that you could take instead, and there would be no need for that ghastly castor oil that you and I know so well. I suggest that to some people this medical care scheme means castor oil, but a medical care scheme under a well thought out plan could achieve the same result.

I do not believe we have to go to socialism in order to get social justice. We have a form of social justice out in Alberta. It is not perfect; but in my opinion, many people are getting proper medical attention in Alberta without having to accept the over-all scheme which is suggested in this bill. I repeat that I believe it is important that we do not put a compulsory bill on the statute books. It is not going to be accepted anyway. What is the government going to do? Is it going to allow people to opt out? This is not clear in the bill. As I read the bill, if the people do not accept the scheme as it is, then they will be penalized in some way or other.

● (5:50 p.m.)

With regard to the compulsory aspect let me make this point. I do not believe in means tests because I have seen them abused. I know old people in this country who cannot get medical care if they say they are broke. They do not get medical attention if they declare they have only small savings. If we are to have a completely compulsory system as envisaged by this bill, there should be no means test at all.

I would suggest that the government change the taxation structure. If someone has too much money and is getting free medical care, then tax him on it. Goodness knows, we are taxing people hard and heavy enough and they have very little say about it. With this type of compulsory taxation we can buy most of the social justice that we want without enforcing other forms of compulsion upon the people.

Although I am going to vote for this bill, Mr. Speaker, I do not think that talking about these matters is a waste of time. However, I am unhappy that the provinces have not got together on this question, and I do not

know what they are going to do about it. I am very anxious to see the elderly people of Canada looked after. The minister of health, the Minister of Labour, in fact all the ministers, have promised that very shortly legislation will be brought before this house which will provide the "big deal" which the elderly people are going to get. We are going to make sure that they get medical care, I am given to understand, and also that they are going to get a pension of \$105 per month.

Because we have lots of time to talk the matter over I do not know why we cannot be told what we are going to get. If we knew what was going to happen to the elderly people we could attack this problem with a much clearer mind, and I would be able to vote with a much clearer conscience for measures which have a compulsory aspect in them. I will accept the reasoning of the government if they will show me that the people I want to help the most are in fact going to be helped. I do not think it is cynical to say "show me". If you buy a pig in a poke you must expect to get hurt. It is very rarely the case that when you get the sack home and open it up you find you have a better pig than you would have had if you had observed the pigs paraded around the auction market. If there are good features about the plan to take care of our elderly people, then why do we not have a look at them? When you have a good product you do not hide it, you put it on show. You advertise your big bargains so as to get the people into your store. If there is a "big deal" coming to the elderly people, then let us have it; why be cagey about it?

I understand that one of the reasons given for delaying this measure is that we are trying to curb inflation. We should certainly do something about inflation, because the elderly people cannot live on \$75 a month today. Two years from now is no time to deal with this particular situation, and I am not at all sold on the idea that this is the place where we should economize. We have had austerity programs before, I know. In the confusion of administering certain measures we sometimes find that such things as stopping the lunches of Indian children take place, and the short-sighted, badly informed people who do this sort of thing in the name of economy rush around trying to find a deputy minister or minister to blame it on. I know something about that, Mr. Speaker, because I have had first-hand experience in administering social justice to our people. There is hardly anyone in this chamber, Mr.