

Medicare

For those people—for those I have referred to—it is all right to have a means test. That is quite acceptable. It is one thing to talk about old age pensioners, but quite another when you mention other people. One must not imagine that the party opposite is totally devoid of intellect. Occasionally that party does something to restore its tarnished image. But, taking the over-all picture, every time new social programs have been introduced, no matter for how long they have been discussed in this country, no matter how much suffering existed and how desperate the situation, no matter how obvious the need, the Conservative party has opposed them.

Once in that party's history, under the leadership of the right hon. gentleman when he was obviously in command of the party, there seemed to be a chance that the party would change. That was refreshing. But then there were those leaders in this country who emerged, opposing this. I suppose we should be glad to see that the balance is being restored and that once again we shall have in this country something that I suppose the country needs: a good, solid, old-fashioned Tory party. Some of the statements made, as reported in *Hansard*, by hon. gentlemen opposite struck me as reactionary even for the nineteenth century. Some of those hon. gentlemen are against compulsion. One hon. gentleman said he was against compulsion in any form. I presume therefore that he is against the laws of this country saying that our children must go to school. It seems to me that his basic interpretation of private enterprise is that we ought to have the freedom of the caveman, who roamed round his cave unfettered by any of this progress that is confusing the human mind.

Of course, as we know, this program will give greater freedom to the five million Canadians to whom hon. gentlemen opposite are so attached. Instead of Robarts care or tin cup care, this program to those five million Canadians will mean greater freedom. The program might not go down too well with the Canadian Manufacturers Association, which seemed a couple of times to pose as a great authority in the field of medicare. It might not sit well with the old established Tory minds of this country. But for the five million people who are suffering from an indignity, I submit that their freedom would be enhanced.

[Mr. Cashin.]

• (5:10 p.m.)

They also contended, supporting what the Canadian Medical Association has said, that we should now have partial medicare and give coverage to a group of five million people. This contradicts the other argument that we do not have sufficient qualified doctors to carry out the proposed program. Hon. members on the other side have presented many arguments, and every time two arguments have been put forward by them it seems that the second contradicts the first.

Anybody who takes the time to read the 27 speeches which have been put on record to date by the members of the official opposition—and it would take a good deal of time—will find within those 27 speeches and the quarter of a million words which have formed the filibuster to date, such numbers of contradictions as would tend to make their case look, to say the least, a little ridiculous.

I think that the time has come to make a decision on the amendment before us. I think it is time for us to be counted—for those who want to move forward to vote against the amendment, and for those who want to continue what they have been doing for the past 100 years, that is, to oppose all forms of democratic progress, to oppose it.

As one who is somewhat disturbed by the imbalance created a few years ago, I welcome a return, as demonstrated during the course of this medicare debate, to the good, old fashioned Tory political party. I think this will make the fight in our coming political battles far more honest. We shall know where we stand and I am confident that the vast majority of the Canadian people will continue to stand for progress as they have in the past.

An hon. Member: Does the Leader of the Opposition (Mr. Diefenbaker) know where they stand?

Mr. Cashin: Unfortunately, I think that today the Leader of the Opposition does know where they stand, and viewing it from this side of the house one observes it not without sorrow.

[Translation]

Mr. Henri Latulippe (Compton-Frontenac): Mr. Speaker, I shall be brief. I do not wish to extend the debate on this motion, but I want nevertheless to make some remarks about