

*Medicare*

are your taxes, this is your money. But in the present case it will be our money which will be used to pay for medicare in the other provinces.

• (7:40 p.m.)

And nobody protests against that, not even those from Ontario. If I were in their place, if I were a member of another province, I would be embarrassed to see that taxes are collected in the province of Quebec to pay for me. One could wonder after that: what do you want exactly? What we want? We want to keep what belongs to us.

Now, the Minister of National Health and Welfare is just doing the opposite. If he provided in his bill that, in the event a province, as it is entitled to according to the constitution, rejected interference by the federal government in the field of health, it could recover, as a fiscal equivalence, the amount which it would not recover by refusing to participate in medicare, then I would not object to the bill at all. I would say to the other provinces: You want it, take it.

Now, I object because no formula is provided enabling Quebec not to take part in the plan, but to enjoy a fiscal equivalence so that it can develop its own plan. Is that asking too much, Mr. Speaker? I do not think so.

**Mr. Choquette:** That was done for the pension plan and that can be done for medicare.

**Mr. Grégoire:** But it is not provided for; the opposite is provided for in that bill. Before criticizing the bill, I asked the minister: "Is the minister ready to amend section 8 to provide for a formula enabling a province to recover the amount involved, otherwise if it does not want to take part in medicare?"

And the minister answered categorically: No, nothing is provided for that. To know what is provided for now, the member has only to read section 8 where it can be seen that before March 31, 1972, provinces which do not participate in medicare will not be entitled to any fiscal adjustments; that is what is provided for.

Yet we do not ask for the impossible; it is not something illogical, irrational. We simply ask that a province refusing federal interference in the field of health can receive a fiscal equivalence so that it would not have to pay taxes twice, or pay taxes for other provinces.

Mr. Speaker, that is the point I wanted to raise during the debate on second reading of Bill No. C-227. I want to add that if I vote

[Mr. Grégoire.]

against the principle of the bill, it is not to prevent other provinces from having a centralized medicare plan, if they want to. No, it simply is because the bill forces Quebec to participate in the plan or else lose a considerable amount of money and pay double taxes. This becomes discrimination, especially since health has always been a field under provincial jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, seeing the federal government act like this now, in 1966, one realizes beyond doubt that if the Canadian confederation can no longer continue as such, it is first and foremost the fault of the federal government which has always violated it as much as possible. The federal government does not seek to correct its mistakes. Even today, in 1966, it is trying to violate the Canadian constitution. Those responsible for the destruction of the Canadian confederation will not be the people of Quebec, but the federal government which will have infringed on the rights of the provinces.

Therefore, hear this: the real responsibility lies with the federal government and not with the province of Quebec.

This province reacts to the intrusion and interference of the federal government.

**Mr. Choquette:** Will the hon. member agree that there are nevertheless matters of national urgency which allow the federal government to take some action, permissible under the constitution itself? I feel that the hon. member is much too radical in his interpretation of the constitution.

**Mr. Grégoire:** Mr. Speaker, this is another good question. If there is any national urgency, let the federal government institute medicare. On the other hand, if there are nine provinces which want it as is, let the program operate for those nine provinces. But as Quebec also intends to establish a medicare plan, but her very own, well, let the federal government establish a clause providing that any province, or at least the province of Quebec, if the other nine provinces are satisfied, may draw some fiscal compensation for its own medicare plan; then, should not this meet the situation of national urgency as concerns medicare? Yes, it would, completely, and without the slightest doubt, since the ten provinces will have their medicare plan, in nine instances administered by Ottawa and in the tenth, administered by Quebec, as is the case at present regarding the pension scheme and others that were in the past joint programs and are today