

*Medicare*

are adequate personnel to take care of all reasonable medical needs.

**Mr. Walker:** One further question. Presumably the delay might amount to as long as five years, optimistically, or ten years, pessimistically. Is it the hon. member's suggestion that a comprehensive universal scheme should be delayed for that length of time, whether it is five years or ten years?

**Mr. Chatterton:** The first thing we think should be covered—and immediately, as of January 1 of next year—is the situation of those who are in need.

**An hon. Member:** They are already taken care of.

**Mr. Chatterton:** No. We should cover them immediately and others who wish to join should do so on a voluntary basis as is the case in British Columbia.

**Mr. Walker:** My question was this: the introduction of a universal, comprehensive scheme is recommended by the Hall Commission and, if I understand the hon. member correctly, he is suggesting that such a scheme should be deferred until facilities are available even if this means a delay of ten years.

● (5:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Chatterton:** Our proposal provides first of all for the coverage of those in need and then for anyone thereafter on a voluntary basis. It could be introduced immediately as a national scheme. It is not compulsory; it is voluntary. It could be introduced immediately, and if there were a delay in respect of those not in need that would be all right. Our proposal could be implemented immediately, not in 1968 but right away.

**Mr. H. W. Herridge (Kootenay West):** Mr. Speaker, I have followed the course of this debate with considerable interest and it is not my intention, in speaking briefly, to repeat the many excellent arguments that have been advanced by members of our party for the introduction of a national health services insurance plan on July 1, 1967. However, during the course of this debate I have discovered that I am a pioneer in this respect in the advocacy of the need for a national health services insurance plan.

I find that I am the only member of the House of Commons at the present time who campaigned during the federal election of 1921 in support of a national health services insurance plan, which was adopted at the

[Mr. Chatterton.]

Liberal convention held in the fall of 1919 as the result of a motion moved by the late Right Hon. Mackenzie King, seconded by the present Senator Turgeon. I will never forget that at that time my father was with me in that campaign because we were both interested in this type of legislation.

I might say I am very glad to note that many younger members of the house who have grown up since, and some who have even been born since that date, recognize the vision which many Canadians had with respect to the need for this plan at that time, and the essential soundness of the ideas which they expressed in resolutions from various local Liberal organizations to their provincial organizations, to the national organization and other conventions shortly after the termination of the first world war.

I remember quite clearly the atmosphere that prevailed at that time, the feeling that we had fought the last world war and were now provided with the opportunity to do something to build a sound society. I remember very clearly there were two things that particularly concerned the people of that day. The first was the need for a national old age pension plan and the second was the need for a national health services insurance plan.

As I said before, Mr. Speaker, these plans were discussed at local organizations and there were what would be called seminars nowadays. I am not quite certain as to the exact meaning of that word, but there were get-togethers in the area I come from, the Kootenays, between various groups that discussed with great conviction the need for these two programs at that particular time, and also the need for the co-operation of local people if any plan, whether it be national, provincial or municipal, were to succeed.

I remember in my own case I happened to be the president of the local hospital board. The board met and members of the hospital society met and discussed what they could do in respect of our hospital facilities with respect to a plan of this sort and discussed the matter with the local doctor. There was that spirit of local participation which I think must be engendered and must be revived if any national plan of consequence is going to succeed to the full.

This was in a period when the majority of people looked forward to the end of all world wars and seized the opportunity to build a just and sound society. However, over the intervening years we have been disillusioned by the course of events. There is no need to go