

*Medicare*

of double taxation. We would like to be taxed only once and directly by the responsible government, which in the present case is the Quebec government. We should stop acting on the federal scene for the sole purpose of political prestige. One move by this government would settle all deadlocked discussions; it would drive away from the federal scene all those actors trying to give an impression of generosity on the part of the central government, while it is just pure hypocrisy. One move by parliament would do justice to the provinces and that is to give back to the provinces the taxation rights that belong to them, namely personal and corporate taxes and succession duties.

As I told the house, let the federal government give back to the provinces what they voluntarily lent it for the duration of the war and what it has wilfully kept for more than twenty years, thus depriving the provinces of their own taxes and causing the headaches now bearing down on provincial parliamentarians.

When you borrow, you must pay back. That is precisely what Ottawa has always refused to do and still does today. I say that is dishonest, and that because the federal government acts that way there have been misunderstandings for twenty years, and that we may have anarchy in the years to come. Will the members from all provinces realize this before it is too late? I certainly hope so, for otherwise I would prefer not to be around to witness the atrocities to come.

Mr. Speaker, I feel that as far as the Canadian community is concerned, its days are numbered unless we revert to a more honest dialogue. Federal-provincial conferences were invented in an attempt to dialogue, but one soon realizes that the federal delegates flaunt an obvious lack of good will.

Bill No. C-227 is still the best proof we have of this. Whereas several provinces have voiced serious objections to the present bill, the government proceeds as if nothing had happened, to the extent that we wonder if it really has discussed the matter with the said provinces.

Sticking to the strong central government principle, the government carries on as if provincial governments were mere vassals, or simply did not exist. And this we dare call co-operative federalism. This reminds me of popular socialist elections in Russia, where only the Communist party candidate may run for election. Thus, the Liberal party will be

[Mr. Gauthier.]

able to tell the people: "As promised, we have given you a medicare bill, although we will not be the ones to give you medicare; this is up to the provinces. We will help the provinces, but on condition that they accept the conditions in our bill. If they refuse, nothing."

That is why I maintain that it would have been much more logical to simply offer federal assistance to those provinces wishing to introduce medicare for their residents, and this help should be granted in the form of new credit made available to the government by the Bank of Canada, and not by an additional tax levied particularly on Canadian workers. In this light, we would have several amendments to present to the hon. minister who introduced the bill.

I note in the bill under its present form that the expression "insured services" means:

—all services rendered by medical practitioners that are medically required—

I wonder if the government has considered all the paramedical services. Optometrists, for instance, whose very valuable services are required daily to care for the eyes of all our people.

Last Wednesday the Prime Minister and the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Messrs. Pearson and MacEachen) clearly stated that they would consider the advisability of including the optical services under medical services to be covered by the proposed medicare plan for Canadians. But these are only considerations, possibilities; there is absolutely nothing of a positive nature either in the ministers' words and even less in the letter of the law itself. And since our party believes only in what is written in black and white, in present laws, we urge the honourable Minister of National Health and Welfare to incorporate it in the act by an amendment, when he moves third reading, so that there may be justice for all. Moreover, the minister must have received a good many requests in this regard, coming from the optometrists themselves or from their association. For the information of the house concerning petitions, I have here an excerpt from the C.O.A. president's report in which he requests the co-operation of the members to force the government's hand.

Here is a paragraph concerning that invitation to the members of the association. I quote:

Every optometrist should make it his duty, before the fall session, to get in touch with his federal member either personally or by letter, to explain