

*Medicare*

I have read all I have had time to read from those two copious volumes which were, of course, sent to every hon. member. I appreciate the work which was done by the commission and the storehouse of knowledge which has been placed at our disposal. Indeed, as one member of this house, I would venture the opinion that we do not use it to the extent we should. The government is certainly not following the guidance offered by the commission in the bill now before us, but I hope that in the near future hon. gentlemen opposite will wake up to the value of the recommendations of the Hall report and be governed thereby.

I firmly support the amendment which was put forward so ably by my hon. friend from Simcoe East (Mr. Rynard). We appreciate the professional knowledge which he brings to this house. I support the amendment because it voices the principle of co-operation with provincial governments. Moreover it recognizes the principle of voluntary choice by individuals. I do not think we have the right to legislate a private profession out of business or to make it unlawful for any person to employ the professional services of his family doctor and pay for them out of his own pocket, if he wishes.

Our amendment would also make adequate prior provision for sufficient medical research, the training of adequate numbers of doctors and medical personnel to cope with future demands.

I should like to quote a letter I have received from a member of the Department of Pathology at Queen's University. I think I am fortunate to have received this letter. I quote this learned doctor as follows:

I am concerned that Mr. Sharp included the reduction of expenditures to research in his statement about the projected baby budget. It is of course difficult for me to write to you in what would appear to be completely logical or objective terms since I have a very personal interest in research. Nonetheless, I should like to make the following comment, which I believe can be made without reference to my own personal interest in medical research.

In the past few years, almost every responsible member of government, and responsible advisory board, such as the Canadian Economic Council have emphasized that the one way to prevent inflation in our nation is to have a higher percentage of university graduates, highly skilled people and scientists, in order to increase our productivity through the application of the most advanced means known. In this context, it is also true that to train some people in a highly skilled fashion has the effect of influencing the productivity of our whole nation through a relatively small expenditure of money. It would seem, therefore, that one

of the anti-inflationary methods would be to increase money in education and research, rather than cut back these expenditures. It is, therefore, rather alarming to hear a statement from a responsible member of government, since the statement seems to indicate a lack of knowledge as to the effect this would have on the very abnormality he is concerned with treating. I trust his comments have been a mistake. In any case, if they were not a mistake I trust other forces within the government will do what can be done to re-assess this possible action.

I think we are very fortunate to have advice voluntarily conveyed in this way from such a learned professional person with regard to the legislation now before us. Has this government manifested any interest in medical research in the past? Does this bill manifest any government interest in medical research at the present time? The answer is obvious: It is, no.

● (8:10 p.m.)

One of the election promises made last November was that 10,000 university scholarships would be created. Mr. Speaker, the government has welched on even that promise. Not long ago they announced they were not interested in that program. I did have the words in my text, Mr. Speaker, that they are no longer interested in the scholarship, but I will not make that accusation because I hope that at some time in the near future they will come to their senses and become interested again in these 10,000 scholarships. But at the present I reiterate that it is obvious that they have welched on them and are not now interested in them. You must agree, Mr. Speaker, that 10,000 government scholarships, if they were now in force throughout the universities across this country, could serve well the cause of medicare in all our provinces, could serve well the principle of scientific research along medical lines, something we lack so badly today.

Finally, our amendment would immediately provide for those persons who are unable, for financial reasons, to provide medical services for themselves. I have heard various figures and it has been estimated that there are up to one third of the Canadian people in that category.

I had an appeal yesterday, before I left home for Ottawa, from a man with a family. He is 48 years old, partially crippled but not totally disabled. He earns a meagre living under the greatest of physical difficulties as a hired agricultural labourer. He cannot afford medically to protect his family. In fact he deserves assistance commensurate with his physical handicap but so far he has been