

*Medicare*

give my interpretation of the events leading up to postponement of medicare. This session, which the newspaper said was attended by 20 Liberal members of this house, indulged on Saturday night in what they call "a wholesale denunciation of the medicare postponement". They were very brave then. I hope they will recover their brave feelings later.

Mr. Thompson, the leader of the Liberal party in the province of Ontario, used words which I am going to adopt, although I do not always wish to adopt his words. Referring to the postponement he said:

This is a moral issue. The Liberal party went to the people and said it would bring in medicare.

Another prominent Liberal did a very good job; he is the editor of *Liberal Action*. He expressed the view that many delegates found it hard to understand how the medicare postponement could be an anti-inflation move. If they did not understand it then, I wonder how they can understand it now? I do not see how they could ever understand it. He pointed out that most of the money needed to finance the medicare program was already being spent on medicare. The extra spending needed would not be required until after the problem of inflation had been solved. Of course that is true. How does it make sense to say they are going to postpone something which starts in July, 1967, because of a recession in October of 1966? Any neophyte in economics knows the situation may totally change in the meantime and that this is a very feeble and phony excuse. I entirely agree with the editor of *Liberal Action*. He goes on to say:

The Liberals have been promising a national medicare program since 1919. The cheque the Liberals first wrote in 1919 has been bouncing ever since.

Mr. Speaker, it is still bouncing; it has not stopped bouncing in 1966. According to the *Star*, in discussing the same matter in Peterborough a Liberal member of parliament is said to have interpreted what happened as being unnecessary and irresponsible and a victory for the cabinet establishment which, according to this anonymous Liberal member, has long been opposed to this legislation. I do not know who the member is but I really think he had something. He went on to predict a growing rift between the members of the cabinet establishment and some members of the Liberal parliamentary wing which, he said, could lead to the destruction of the party. I do not know who this member was but I am sure the house would be interested to hear from him now in explanation of the

[Mr. Brewin.]

views that he put forward in Peterborough at that time. In what I have said I have relied upon expressions of opinion from those who have either supported or who owe loyalty to the Liberal party. I am not in either of these categories, but I say that even now it is not too late, if people of good will and conviction have the gumption to stick to their convictions, to redeem the situation.

• (4:40 p.m.)

Canada ought to have its national medicare scheme in effect on its 100th birthday, July 1, 1967, as the Minister of National Health and Welfare so eloquently pointed out to this house not very many months ago. The supposed inflationary obstacle is a complete and utter phony. I urge those in the Liberal party, and there are many of them, who clearly were elected on the faith of the promises made by them in this regard, to show good faith, or even one or two of them to show good faith to those who relied on their promises. This would do something to dispel the cynicism with which we are regarded when these pledges, made so unequivocally, are brushed aside for reasons which are so phony. If only a few of the Liberals who had this conviction, and I believe many of them had it, would stick to their conviction with determination, despite all that has happened, Canada could have this enlightened, this necessary, this urgent legislation in effect by its 100th birthday.

**Mr. W. M. Howe (Wellington-Huron):** Mr. Speaker, when one enters a debate of this type at this stage of the game it is rather difficult not to be repetitious. A previous speaker said that this is an historic and far reaching piece of legislation. We all agree that it is far reaching, as any program is that improves the welfare of every man, woman and child in Canada. As to its being historic, I agree with the Liberal speaker in this respect because it has been appearing and wobbling in and out of Liberal election propaganda since 1919. We are faced with the fact that the plan is not going to come into force until 1968, almost two years hence, and who knows what may happen to it between now and then.

Last week I asked the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacEachen) a question in connection with the possibility of sending this piece of legislation to a committee for study. The minister's reply was:

It is not the intention of the government to send the medical care bill to a committee for study. It is a very short bill and it speaks for itself. In my view it can properly be studied in committee of the whole.