

*Medicare*

It seems to me this is plain, simple and sensible. In the past there has been a great deal of intellectual dishonesty and economic nonsense spoken about various programs of this kind. People have been deceived and beguiled, for political purposes, into believing that they can secure certain benefits without paying any compensating cost, either the immediate and direct cost or the indirect cost which is implied in the program. In many instances it is quite likely that the people directly concerned or as a whole would have accepted the cost, knowing what the program is going to do; but I think it is only fair, proper and equitable that when the government proposes measures such as this, or any similar measure or enactment they should set out wherever possible the precise cost involved.

This is what the Hall Commission recommends. It may well be that the minister feels such a provision cannot be incorporated in the legislation. This may be a matter of budgetary consideration that the Minister on Finance (Mr. Sharp) may in due course see fit to implement. However, I draw it to the attention of the minister, and hope that before the debate is concluded he will indicate that this matter will receive the attention of the government.

The other point I wish to bring to the attention of the house has also been raised by other members, most recently by the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire). It appears—heaven forbid—that I must agree with the hon. member for Lapointe on this particular issue.

**Some hon. Members:** Oh, oh.

**Mr. Baldwin:** In this connection I should like to refer to recommendation 199 of the Hall Commission report:

That a federal-provincial conference be convened within six months of the tabling of volume I of this report:

(a) to initiate the necessary planning and fiscal arrangements for the co-ordinated implementation of the program as a whole;

(b) to reach agreement on the implementation of the health services program we have recommended.

I think this is repeated in the very first recommendation:

That the federal government enter into agreements with the provinces to provide grants on a fiscal need formula—

The type of agreement envisaged there is not the type of agreement involved when a highwayman pulls out a pistol, points it at his

victim and says, "Stand and deliver." That is an agreement of a kind, but it is not the type of agreement the Hall Commission had in mind. The agreement referred to in this recommendation is one reached before the fact, and not after.

• (8:30 p.m.)

It is notorious that the state of federal-provincial relations in this country has reached a delicate and sensitive period. In any federal system this is always the case; but it is particularly so in Canada, having in mind that federal-provincial relations today are compounded in their difficulty by a number of other situations, notably ethnic and language difficulties. At this time, surely in the name of heaven it is incumbent upon this government to exercise the utmost caution to proceed only when agreements have in fact been reached prior to the event, particularly in an area about which there can be absolutely no doubt that the jurisdiction lies completely within the scope of the provincial governments. I suggest that to proceed the way in which the government is proceeding is akin to the situation of a bull in a china shop. It cannot fail to have the effect of inflaming and aggravating the existing problems and difficulties between some of the provinces and the federal government. It is true it might have taken a little longer, it might have taken a number of conferences—I am not in a position to know exactly what the minister or his predecessor have done—but it does seem to me that it would not have been too high a price to pay to maintain an equilibrium in our provincial federal relations to comply with the explicit recommendations of the Hall Commission. I am afraid the course has been fixed. The government is determined to proceed, and when this has been completed there will be a greater degree of disruption between some of the provinces and the federal government, a situation which we can ill afford at this particular time.

Let me conclude, Mr. Speaker, by saying that I propose to support the amendment because I think it is a sensible one. If it is passed it will compel the federal government to seek out the provinces and to secure their individual and collective agreement to a type of program which is acceptable.

I think there is no doubt that in the not too distant future an agreement will be reached which will be acceptable to all governments and to the people of this country, because there is a need and a demand for a program providing health services for the people of