

Medicare

I can only say that the newspaperman on that occasion in Pincher Creek misunderstood what he was saying. Nevertheless, increases in wages, increases in profits, increases in plans that lead to higher taxes, aggravate the inflationary trend. When you get increases in wages, up go the costs the consumer has to pay and away go the increases in wages because these people have to pay more for their goods. It become a vicious circle. These high profits, high taxes, high wages and government spending for grandiose socialistic plans all increase the cost of living. I do not think anyone can deny that. This country is crying for the kind of leadership that will categorize the peoples' needs by a priority formula.

What should come now? What should we be doing? We cannot be critical, Mr. Speaker, unless we have an alternative. I suggest that instead of introducing plans we are not going to implement for two years—this plan is universal as it stands now—we must financially assist the provinces and municipalities to escalate and accelerate educational opportunities. We will need more doctors, nurses and technicians before a universal medical plan can be implemented. Schools, colleges and universities must be built now and masses of people given an equal opportunity for an education so that they will be more productive economically and socially. Above all, we should be assisting the individual in the state to assume more of his own responsibilities instead of becoming a burden on the state, as is the case when there are a number of unemployables. We should lower the percentage of the needy through education.

Let us take a look at things from the point of view of local governments and municipalities. The leader of the New Democratic Party should know something about this because he was the premier of a province. Since 1959 local governments' costs of education in Canada has increased from \$548 million to \$797 million. However, this has not even scratched the surface of the need and demand for higher education in Canada. In so far as the age group from 10 to 14 years are concerned, educational opportunities are almost equal for 97 per cent of this group. In secondary schools opportunities among the age group from 15 to 19 years are not equal. Retention of students who remain at high school varies from province to province, for example, from a high 68 per cent in British Columbia, with Alberta and Saskatchewan

[Mr. Woolliams.]

coming a close second, to a low of 50 per cent in the province of Quebec. That means that 50 per cent of the people in the province of Quebec who finish grade eight drop out of school. It also means that 30 per cent of the students in British Columbia drop out and about 34 per cent in Saskatchewan and Alberta.

• (3:50 p.m.)

We are all aware that I.Q. determines retention in school to a certain extent, but lack of educational opportunity is the greatest cause of the drop-out. Let us take a look at the position in universities. In the age group 20 to 24 opportunities are not equal at universities, ranging from a high in British Columbia of 9.5 per cent to a low of 3.9 per cent in Newfoundland. With a Canadian average of 8 per cent this means that only 8 out of 100 people go to university. The minister does not have to take the blame for this, of course; I am pointing out that only 8 people out of 100 who are poured into productivity in Canada have a university education.

On top of that there is a big brain drain to the United States. I suggest that these statistics are important because I believe that education should have higher priority than the implementation of the bill now before the house. The average Canadian child receives approximately 8.2 years of schooling. The latest figures on this point are those of the last census in Canada; they may be higher now but not much. The provinces are spending from a high in Alberta of \$417 per student to a low of \$140 in Newfoundland.

In 1961, Mr. Speaker, Canada devoted a greater proportion of her total gross national product to health services than any other nation surveyed by the Hall commission—this in spite of what some of my hon. friends say on platforms at times—except Australia, in terms of the percentage of the gross national product spent on health. For example, Canada spent 5.8 per cent of its gross national product on health, England spent 4.7 per cent, Israel 5.1 per cent, Sweden, which has been held out as an example, 4.7 per cent and the United States 5.5 per cent. These figures were checked today.

Canada ranks favourably in terms of population per hospital bed compared with other countries, and our government can take some responsibility for that. In 1959, of 20 western countries Switzerland had the lowest ratio with 80 persons per hospital bed, followed by Canada, Australia, New Zealand and Sweden with population ratios of 90 persons per bed.