

they can be at home, but how lamb-like they are when they get to Ottawa and come under the eagle eye of the Minister of Finance who is now the undisputed boss of the formerly great Liberal party. We are not alone in our thinking. I should like to refer to the *Ottawa Citizen*. I do not have to tell the members of this house who spend nine months of the year in Ottawa, how close the Liberal party is to the *Ottawa Citizen*. I am sure the editor of the *Ottawa Citizen*, when he wrote the editorial I am going to quote, wrote it with a heavy heart, as heavy a heart as the minister had when he introduced this legislation yesterday.

I want to say that never in my 20 years of public life have I heard a minister introduce an important bill, a measure as close to his heart as this one, as hesitantly, as apologetically or as quietly as did the Minister of National Health and Welfare. I do not blame him. It must have been a bitter pill he had to swallow. In any event, here is what the *Ottawa Citizen* had to say and I quote from the editorial headed, "Challenge on medicare":

Reform-minded Liberal MP's are quite right to challenge Finance Minister Sharp and the cabinet on their decision to postpone for a year the inauguration of national health insurance. This is a Liberal commitment, made in the 1965 election campaign. Anyone who carried the Liberal colours in that election must feel he is in danger of breaking an important promise if the program is delayed till July, 1968. Before that time, there may very well be another general election.

There is what the editor of the *Ottawa Citizen* had to say. Let us look at another Liberal newspaper, the *Toronto Star*. Certainly, it is Liberal at election time, although it is very critical of the Liberal party between elections. Here is the editorial which appeared in the *Toronto Star* of Friday, September 9, 1966. The headline is, "Medicare delay is outrageous deceit", and it goes on to say:

Once again the Canadian people have been deceived and disappointed in their expectation of health insurance—by the party which began promising it in 1919.

Federal medicare is to be postponed for a year on the excuse—and it is merely an excuse—that this is necessary to fight inflation.

A one-year postponement would be bad enough for the 4,000,000 Canadians who have inadequate medical insurance coverage and the 6,000,000 who have none at all.

But who, in view of the 47-year record of Liberal nonfulfilment of this promise, can have any confidence that the delay will be only for one year?

### Medicare

I want to remind the Minister of National Health and Welfare that his integrity and the integrity of his party is being questioned in that quotation, not by opponents, not by members of the New Democratic Party, but by the newspaper in Canada which has the largest circulation of any I know supporting the Liberal party. This is what they say. This newspaper came back to the argument yesterday in an even stronger editorial. I am going to put it on the record because the language is so strong that it might be considered by some people as unparliamentary if they saw it. I can only say that what I am repeating is not my view, although I subscribe to it, but the view of the *Liberal Toronto Star* as stated in its editorial for Tuesday, October 11, 1966. The editorial is headed, "The faltering course of true Liberalism". I am not going to read it all because I think my time would be up, but I am going to read this substantial section from it:

The reform elements within the party are disorganized and dispirited. The rightwingers, mainly from the prairies and the west coast, are clearly dominating the conference. And the party leadership seems as smug and complacent—though not as arrogant—as it was in the last days of the St. Laurent administration a decade ago...

● (4:30 p.m.)

Maybe no one could really expect the delegates to embarrass the government by condemning its decision to postpone medicare from July 1, 1967 to July 1, 1968. But we hoped enough Liberals would be sufficiently concerned to register a strong and loud protest.

Fourteen did—out of a total of 2,000 delegates. The overwhelming majority uncritically accepted Finance Minister Mitchell Sharp's bland explanation that medicare had to be delayed on the ground of "fiscal responsibility".

It was a curious performance by Mr. Sharp. He spoke of the "great pain" he had endured in announcing the delay in medicare. He said the greatest task of the party was to maintain full employment by making the right economic decisions. And he said failure to make the right economic decisions—such as the postponement of medicare—would jeopardize the future of "the little man".

Thus vacillation is turned into a virtue. And a giant Liberal assembly sits by, with scarcely a murmur of protest, as a Liberal finance minister offers the dubious proposition that he is helping the "little people" of Canada by denying them the protection of medicare for another year.

What kind of curious Liberal logic is this? Is this going to impress the aged, the sick, and the poor who have waited patiently for decades for the Liberal party to honour its pledge on medicare? Are they expected to postpone their ailments and their medical bills until 1968?

In the whole range of Liberal policy in recent years, no issue has constituted so firm a moral commitment as the pledge to launch medicare by July, 1967.