

*Supply—Health and Welfare*

to impose a means test. We expressed our willingness at federal-provincial conferences, both under the Liberal federal government and under the Conservative federal government, to pay our share of the cost of the government would be prepared to remove the means test. The hon. member for Saskatoon has not pointed out that during the six years the Conservative government was in office the means test was retained and that there was no willingness on their part to remove it in spite of our repeated requests.

It is true that with reference to provincial programs a means test had to be retained, particularly with reference to supplementary pensions for the old age security group. It is also perfectly apparent that with the limited financial resources a provincial government has it is almost impossible to pay a universal pension to everyone at a certain age, because a provincial government does not have the power a federal government has of collecting back in income tax a substantial part of the pension from those who do not really require it.

I want the committee and the people of Saskatoon to notice that the hon. member is arguing for the application of a means test to medicare. Does this mean that the conservative party members have now become the exponents of means tests? Does this mean they propose that the old age security pension now universally paid should be rescinded and a means test applied? If a means test is fair and equitable in medicare, it is equally fair and equitable when applied to a pension. Is the Conservative party now, through its recent more reactionary acquisitions, announcing that it has taken the backward step of supporting means tests in social welfare and health problems?

I hope that Conservative members, particularly from Saskatchewan, who have campaigned a great deal on the question of removing the means tests, will now make it perfectly clear whether the hon. member for Saskatoon was speaking for the Conservative party and particularly for the Conservative members for the province of Saskatchewan.

Another thing to which the hon. member made reference was medicare and his opposition to the four basic principles of the Hall Commission report which the Prime Minister endorsed on July 19 and 20 of last year. The hon. member for Saskatoon took some credit for the fact that the administration of the present Leader of the Opposition set up the Hall Commission. For that they deserve full

[Mr. Douglas.]

credit, particularly for choosing such an outstanding person as Mr. Justice Hall. Having taken the credit for appointing the Hall Commission, I wonder why the Conservative party has not come out and endorsed the report and the recommendations of that commission.

• (4:50 p.m.)

The Conservative party has been lying in the bushes so far as the Hall report is concerned. They have carefully avoided coming out into the open and saying where they stand on the recommendations of the commission. In the recent election there was no clearcut forthright statement from the Conservative party saying where they stood on the Hall Commission report. It has been left to the hon. member for Saskatoon to say that the Conservative party is opposed to the first basic principle laid down by the Hall commission, namely, that medicare should be universal and should apply to every citizen of this country irrespective of race, colour or financial circumstances.

**Mr. Brand:** Would the hon. member permit a question? Is he familiar with the meaning of the word "universal" as it is used in the Hall report? If not, I am perfectly willing to acquaint him with it.

**Mr. Douglas:** I am perfectly familiar with it. I am perfectly familiar with the paragraphs in which Mr. Justice Hall argues against any kind of means test and contends that the indignity and humiliation of any kind of test is totally uncalled for.

**Mr. Brand:** May I ask—

**Mr. Douglas:** The hon. member can sit down. I suggest he study the Hall Commission report. If he would do that instead of making the rather asinine statements he was making this afternoon I think he could make a more useful contribution to this committee and to his party.

**Mr. Starr:** Don't get mad.

**Mr. Lambert:** Come to Alberta and say that.

**Mr. Douglas:** As a matter of fact, I can tell the hon. member for Edmonton West that I said exactly the same thing in the province of Alberta.

**Mr. Lambert:** And where did it get you?

**Mr. Douglas:** Of course, the hon. member for Edmonton West is very interested in where it gets one. That is why the Tory party had one program in Alberta and another in