

*Medicare*

anything about it because it is up to the provinces. That is a rank, stupid ploy—the stupidest I have ever heard. Do hon. members opposite think the Canadian people are as stupid as that?

My hon. friend says he is in favour of medicare. I am voting against it. We have it in my province, and I do not need two plans. Is British Columbia going to accept it? Is Quebec, or Alberta or Ontario going to accept it?

If hon. members opposite want an election, let them call it now. This legislation is due to take effect, according to their own leader, on July 1, 1968. Now the press says we are filibustering. Surely this is the time to talk about it, because we will find ourselves stuck with it for a long time to come. That is all I have to say. As far as I am concerned I will never vote for your third reading, or for any part of the bill.

**Hon. Gordon Churchill (Winnipeg South Centre):** I thought it would be a little unfair to expect the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacEachen) to speak tonight when there are only a few minutes left. It might be better if he were to wind up this debate tomorrow. So I am taking pity on him, now.

● (9:50 p.m.)

I must say that although I seldom feel sorry for anybody on the other side of the house, I have felt a slight twinge on behalf of the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacEachen) who, several times during the past few months, has been humiliated by his own party in the way that they have treated this bill of his with which he was going to make such a major display. They arranged in July, when the house was about to wind up, that this bill would stand over until the fall. That being the case, I thought that the dominion-provincial conference would consider it before it was brought back to the house. At that time the minister was very disappointed with the arrangement which had been made by his colleagues.

Then just recently the operational date of the bill was postponed by order of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp), and the Minister of National Health and Welfare was left stranded just when he was expecting to parade his accomplishment before a notable annual meeting. Now we are in the situation where there is no certainty that if second reading is passed tonight, or tomorrow, the bill will go into committee of the whole

house. It appears that the minister's colleagues do not want that to happen, because if it does, then the Minister of Finance would have to explain his position in postponing this particular matter.

It is a very awkward position for a minister to be in, and that is why I did not want him to have to expose himself to the public gaze tonight in winding up this debate. I would rather that he have time to think it over, and perhaps he will have that chance tomorrow.

We have been subjected to a great deal of propaganda with regard to medicare. The people of Canada have been brainwashed to the extent that they are being enticed to believe that this proposition came from the minds of the present federal government. Of course this is all wrong. This bill is not really the initial move with regard to medicare. It is simply a method by which additional funds may be made available to the provinces, from the federal government, to assist them in their medicare schemes, a number of which have been in operation in certain provinces for some considerable time. But through propaganda the federal government has tried to make the people of Canada believe that it has produced something really wonderful, a medicare plan, and in fact all the time this bill is spoken of as the medicare bill. But I know that the people of this country are not so easily fooled.

Province by province medicare has been introduced, or is being introduced. It is a matter of importance in each province, and there is a general feeling of the populace that medicare should be instituted. Of course the method by which it is done is another proposition entirely. Some provinces have medicare schemes in operation which they consider to be satisfactory, and the governments of those provinces are answerable to their own people for those schemes. Other provinces would like to introduce medicare, but they feel they have not the financial resources to do it at the present time.

The general subject of medicare is known to the Canadian people, and I think is an acceptable method of approaching health problems, except that in some areas it is not done just the way some people would like to see it done, and the criticism that has been levelled against the bill now before the house is with respect to the method. The principle of medical services for the population of