

*Medicare*

Today, standards in medical school are too high. Automatically, we exclude some students who could pursue good medical studies, and become good general practitioners all across Canada. But they are excluded right from the start. Furthermore, doctors who practised in Canada are leaving for the United States because they cannot practise anymore here as they are offered better positions there.

And in the third place, the physician had formerly no social security. He had to work till his death under difficult conditions. He had to provide his own old age pension. He had to provide for his own future. At the present time, the proposed legislation already makes such provision. Those who wish to dedicate themselves to the medical profession will be sure, at least as long as they will be in a position to do so, to work and take advantage of other social legislation.

It is claimed that there is a shortage of medical equipment. There is a shortage of staff, because under the present circumstances, university students are inclined to specialize before practising medicine and this is absurd. But, do not see why there should be some objection to that bill simply because there is a shortage of medical personnel.

Today, there are 24,000 doctors in Canada but only 9,360 are general practitioners, which is nonsensical compared to 10,320 specialists. This is contrary to common sense. General practitioners represent 39 per cent and specialists 43 per cent. Twenty years ago it was the opposite. In the province of Quebec things are even worse.

Then, do you suppose when we say that in medicine we do not have the necessary human material, it can be a valid argument for maintaining that this bill should not be passed? Everybody seems agreeable to recognizing the great principles. However, we would like to evade the issue by stating arguments which are strictly deceptive.

Mr. Speaker, I should like to say that we have here a principle which is valid for all the provinces, which is based on common sense, on the basic right of the government to take care of human health. Health as well as education is a basic right, and the government must do everything in its power so that all citizens may be in good health.

Yesterday, I heard a member say that we were putting the citizens in a political strait jacket. I would want us to work together,

with a little common sense and not too much discussion, which is a loss of time, and pass a social piece of legislation which will be, I hope, the first step toward "pharmacare" and "preventicare".

People who want to cure a nation must see to it that preventive measures are made available to every one. Let the drugs from the drugstores be available to everybody, just like medicare.

I should not like to prolong this debate any longer. I already told the house that had the federal government not participated as they did, in a direct way, even though this may be a constitutional matter which is perhaps not entirely under federal jurisdiction, I am wondering where we would stand today, in 1966, if that had been left in the care of the provinces, as set out in the constitution.

I believe the federal government have set a precedent, that they have been generous; they even went beyond their rights, so to speak, so as to remind the provinces that they had their own rights. It may be all very well to say that in 1966, but in 1919, when those medicare plans came up for the first time, the provinces were not financially ready or were not considering the setting up of plans and legislation of that kind. I see that the hon. member for Simcoe East (Mr. Rynard) is looking at me. He knows very well that those who practise medicine have 150 ways of filling in insurance forms, about 350 plans in order to submit their claims, as most insurance companies have restrictive clauses. Payment is often made only after the third, the fourth or the fifth visit. The hospital is not paid; visits at home are paid; visits at the office are paid also, but this or that is not paid. But why not have an overall plan, that would be uniform throughout Canada? Moreover, most of the insurance companies do not fulfil their contracts nowadays with the people who relied upon them, with their clients. You are promised wonders when you take out insurance; but most people do not even know what the contract means when sickness strikes.

Some insurance companies have deluded and continue to delude the public. Will that still be tolerated in Canada in 1966? If insurance companies are in earnest, let them form one large company, provincial in scope, on a non-profit basis, so that everyone can have the same protection; and let provincial governments ask this one company to act as their agent as Bill No. C-227 stipulates. This bill is just, fair, and above all intelligent, accessible