

Medicare

most harmonious and happy one in our province. The hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam questioned whether we support health care legislation. I say to him and to the members of the House of Commons that we pioneered health care in our province and in our country.

Mr. J. H. Horner (Acadia): Mr. Speaker, I rise, heavy at heart, to have to speak once again on this particular piece of legislation and to urge once again that the government halt their action in this regard, take a second look, go slowly, and go carefully. What are they doing? Where has co-operative federalism gone? Earlier today in the committee on transport and communications the minister said "We do not intend to invoke part III of this transportation bill because it concerns interprovincial trucking—"

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. I am sure the hon. member recognizes that the reference he is making now has no relationship to Bill C-227.

Mr. Horner (Acadia): Well, Mr. Speaker, I used this as an example and I intend to link it with my reference—and I think it is a logical reference—to this whole problem of co-operative federalism.

Part III of the transportation bill is not going to be implemented until the Minister of Transport (Mr. Pickersgill) has an opportunity to discuss this with the provinces and until full co-operation can be reached with the provinces. Now, I say to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacEachen) why is he not doing the same thing in respect of this piece of legislation; why is a federal-provincial conference not called to discuss this thoroughly, so as to ensure that what the house passes today will be enacted fairly and justly by those provinces.

I do not wish to contribute to the holding of a hammer over the provinces, and saying to them "Abide by this rule, or you are not going to receive \$14 per capita for every person in the province". This is what this government is saying. Is that what co-operative federalism means to the minister? I interpret it altogether differently. We in Canada today are at the crossroads of remaining a nation or dividing ourselves. I have seen evidence today which angered me when I saw that a man would stoop so low as to incite and divide Canada.

I ask the government what they are doing by means of this piece of legislation to unite Canada, to bring us together, to weld us

closer together? Nothing; nothing. Why do they foist this upon parliament and say "Pass it now", when it is not going to be enacted for 22 months? Is that co-operative federalism? I do not think it is, and that is why at the beginning of my remarks I said I rise with a heavy heart to have to speak once again on this particular legislation, because Canada means a lot to me and I want it to remain united. I do not want Canada to be the 51st state of the United States. I want us to remain strong and remain united.

What part in co-operative federalism does this play when we say to the provinces "You must bring in legislation that is operated on a non-profit basis; you must bring in insured services to cover 90 per cent of the population immediately on the enactment of this act; these four criteria must be obeyed or you will receive no money". Is this not the heavy hand; is this not a bribe; is this not forcing the provinces into something?

I really find no fault with this amendment. In my interpretation of it, this amendment says "Let us take a look at this; let us give the provinces the money to administer their own plans when they may see fit". But, Mr. Speaker, we must remember that we now are moving into a field which is within provincial jurisdiction, and we are using the heavy hand of money to persuade the provinces to accept what we want them to accept.

● (7:40 p.m.)

This is a strange twist to co-operative federalism. Let us compare this legislation with the pension plan, which was implemented and is administered by the federal government. The federal government collects the money and ensures that there shall be pensions paid. However, in respect of this medicare scheme the provinces are being asked to act as administrators. We are saying to them that before they get any money they must listen to us and do what they are told. Surely the minister could negotiate a better arrangement than that. Surely he has more confidence in his aides and colleagues in the cabinet. Obviously he could have obtained some degree of co-operation on the part of the provinces.

I suppose I could be considered as a westerner in view of the fact that I continually advocate things on behalf of the west. In spite of that fact I have always defended the argument that we should have a strong central government. Far be it from me to deny the federal government the right to move into the field of medical care, either by initiation

[(Sibawa) 1966-11-20]