

*Medicare*

for and entitled to under any other Act of the Parliament of Canada or under any law of a province relating to workmen's compensation;

Mr. Chairman, the bill introduced by the federal government states clearly that the federal government will subsidize the provinces according to their wishes and their legislation, but the federal authorities specify four major points which the provinces must meet.

And we can read very well in the bill: "A prepaid national and universal medical insurance plan".

The provinces must meet four basic conditions; Ottawa, and the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacEachen) is aware of it, chooses the four basic conditions so that a province may pass, accept or introduce legislation concerning medical insurance, or medicare as it is called across the country.

First: The coverage of such a plan must be complete, which means that the plan must cover all the services rendered by medical practitioners.

Second: The plan must be sponsored by the provincial government, but suggested by the federal government.

Third: The contributions paid must be portable from one province to another, and finally,

Fourth: All residents of a province must be eligible thereto.

The inception date of that plan, as suggested a year ago, should have been July 1, 1967; now it will be July 1, 1968.

Mr. Chairman, we hon. members, whatever may be the party we belong to, do receive representations regarding that universal medical care insurance plan. Earlier, I heard an hon. member refer to the eligibility of optometrists, for instance, oculists, pediatricists, dentists in that insurance plan. If a province, either Quebec, Saskatchewan, Alberta or British Columbia, institutes a medical care insurance plan including oculists, opticians, pediatricists, dentists, the federal government clearly specifies that the federal plan will apply inasmuch as the provinces comply with the four points in question. Then, Mr. Chairman, I believe the federal government should say rather in Bill No. C-227 that it will co-operate with the provinces, under the plan or the legislation implemented by them. And here, I shall quote what was said by the Secretary of State (Miss LaMarsh), when she was minister of national health and welfare.

Under the Canada Assistance Plan, we are ready to put up one dollar for every dollar now spent by

[Mr. Caouette.]

the provinces on mothers allowances, an assistance to mothers with dependent children.

We are ready to share the costs of health services provided by the provinces to public assistance recipients. We shall arrange to include the costs of medical, nursing, dental, optical and pharmaceutical care.

Those were the words of the present Secretary of State on April 20, 1965.

However, it will be for the provinces to decide on the extent of such services and it will be their responsibility to take the necessary action to provide health services deemed appropriate in their particular case.

This health legislation is interim legislation, that will stay in operation only until such time as a medical care program comes into force, which I hope will be very soon.

That was stated by the Secretary of State, when she was minister of national health and welfare, before the Niagara Falls Optimist Club, on April 20, 1965.

Mr. Chairman, we are no longer asking for what the hon. Secretary of State was suggesting a year and a half ago. We are not requesting special treatment for some segments of society, we simply ask that the federal government stick to its comprehensive bill, which provides for individual help to the provinces, to the full extent of the government's possibilities, but without interfering.

• (8:40 p.m.)

When we say in Quebec, for instance, that medicare will have to be drawn up and organized in Quebec, we also say that here, Ottawa has no right to tell the province of Quebec what to do, how to go about it, or what not to do. It is up to the province of Quebec to assume its responsibility, just as Manitoba must assume its own. And then, Mr. Chairman, Ottawa must assume its own responsibilities. The Minister of National Health and Welfare is now receiving—just as we are—requests from optometrists, dentists and pediatricists who are demanding the same treatment as that which is given or will be given to medical practitioners. And the minister is aware of the fact that optometrists, in the exercise of their profession, are victims of unfair treatment in this bill now before us, this Bill No. C-227. Medical practitioners will make use of their influence to eliminate optometrists and pediatricists, under the pretext that they alone are qualified medical practitioners.

However, Mr. Chairman, I have not the slightest grievance against any physician in Canada, but I would like to see the optometrists and pediatricists respected in the same