

Proceedings on Adjournment Motion

It is not good enough to tell us that what the Prime Minister was saying is simply that tax room will be made for the provinces. That is a very wide open statement. Surely it is clear that once the federal government withdraws its contribution to the medicare programs in the provinces it throws the provinces back to the pre Rowell-Sirois days and prevents us from having uniform standards of hospital and medical care across this country.

I stand here tonight, not in an argumentative mood. I do not stand here haranguing the government. I stand here pleading with the Liberal government, bearing in mind the years it took to get this legislation on the books, not to let it go down the drain because of an interpretation of the act which I say is incorrect. I am prepared to stand by and accept the words in the act and in *Hansard* which say that what is to be done at the end of five years is that there will be a review and proposals if necessary, but let us not give the country the impression that at the end of five years medicare is out so far as the federal government is concerned. I am sure this is not the impression which was intended to be given. I hope there will be a proper clarification at this time.

Mr. H. E. Gray (Parliamentary Secretary to Minister of Finance): Mr. Speaker, the question of the interpretation of the words of the Prime Minister in the light of the provisions of section 8 of the act, and the question of the interpretation of section 8 of the act in the light of the words of the Prime Minister are questions of interpretation which I do not think can be dealt with fully in an adjournment debate of this type. It seems to me there

is nothing basically inconsistent with what I understand the Prime Minister to have said. May I suggest that his words could be taken as referring to a change in the amount and manner of payment under the act in lieu of the contributions specified thereby.

Let me go on to say that the national medicare act has been passed by parliament; it is the law of the land and obviously the federal government is obligated to live up to its terms. I think we should recall that the creation of a national program for medical care, through the passage of this act, was the achievement of a Liberal government. It was a Liberal government that presented the medicare law to parliament. I for one am proud to be among those who supported this measure. This measure did not come within 50 years of the Pearson Liberal government taking office; it came within less than four years. It came as a result of a Liberal government supported by members such as myself, along with others on this side of the house.

Mr. Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): So where do we stand now?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Pursuant to provisional standing order 39A the motion to adjourn the house is now deemed to have been adopted. Accordingly this house stands adjourned until two thirty o'clock tomorrow afternoon.

Motion agreed to and the house adjourned at 10.27 p.m.

[The following items were passed in Committee of Supply this day:]

DEPARTMENT OF SUPPLY AND SERVICES

No. 1, 5, 10, 15, 20, 30, 35.