

deal with a small segment of the whole problem of health care in the modern state.

It is not necessary for me to review the basic recommendations of the Hall commission report. I think it is obvious to all—and this view has already been expressed during the debate on second reading—that the present bill falls far short of implementing many of the objectives of the Hall commission report.

This has resulted from the government's failure to carry out adequate consultation with the governments most concerned, namely the provincial governments. When the legislation was first mooted the former minister of national health and welfare who is now Secretary of State (Miss LaMarsh) indicated to the provincial governments that there would be, as had been recommended by the Hall commission report, a federal-provincial health conference which would make it possible for the governments most concerned to bring their representations, which were based on the report, to the attention of the federal authority.

As I recall it, Mr. Speaker, one of the meetings held along these lines was attended by the former minister, and the next meeting was attended by the new minister, who presented to the provincial health ministers a fait accompli. He laid down a rather rigid set of criteria comprising four points that are well known to the members of this house, and created a sense of frustration in governments at the provincial level which has resulted in the present difficulties which confront us in considering this legislation.

There was a great desire on the part of the government to get the legislation before the house. It came up first of all last July when we were anticipating a summer recess, and an attempt was made to complete second reading at that stage. I was bold enough at that time, Mr. Speaker, to prophesy that the target date that was laid down by the minister, of July 1, 1967 for implementation of medicare, would not be met. I know it is not perhaps quite the thing to quote your own speeches, but as reported at page 7589 of *Hansard* for July 12 I was bold enough to say:

I scarcely believe, however, that on the basis of past performance, at least during the 15 years I have been in this house, we are going to have a comprehensive and absolutely complete program in operation as early as the beginning of our 100th birthday.

Medicare

In other words, on the basis of the past performance of the government we could have anticipated that the target date put forward by the minister was not a realistic one in many respects and would inevitably have to be altered. And this has been the case; there has been a postponement.

● (12:40 p.m.)

I do not think it is adequate, Mr. Speaker, for a government charged with the responsibility of implementing a health charter of the quality of the Hall commission report to operate on the basis of electioneering propaganda. The hon. member for Dollard indicated that the opposition groups were operating on this basis. I think it has become crystal clear in recent months that this piece of legislation, along with other basic matters in Canada, has become part of a game of oneupmanship which is being used by responsible ministers to establish their claim to succession in a perpetual and perennial Liberal leadership race. The headlines in the daily press talk about the contest of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp) *v.* the hon. member for Davenport (Mr. Gordon). At one time the Minister of Finance is in the lead; at another time the member for Davenport is in the lead. At other times it is a contest of the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacEachen) *v.* the Minister of National Defence (Mr. Hellyer).

I had the impression, when the minister endeavoured to rush this legislation through last July, that it was his contribution to the game of oneupmanship. Then if the program does not proceed according to the schedule recommended by the minister there is the constant threat of resignation. That is a confusing and awkward way to run a country, I suggest.

Providing a comprehensive health insurance program for Canada is not an item in the leadership race. This is an opportunity to provide adequate health care, as set out for us in the Hall commission report which, I reiterate, goes much further than the concept of medicare as laid out in Bill No. C-227.

It is for this reason that the members of the official opposition have seized the opportunity, made possible by the government's delay in implementing the legislation, to bring the health care program more closely into line with the recommendations of the Hall commission. After all, it was the Conservative government which set up this royal commission in an attempt to get the subject out of the realm of politics and perpetual