

*Medicare*

exclusive provincial jurisdiction. When I speak of the central government, I do not mean the government in office more than the Conservative government in office from 1957 to 1963, because it is under a Conservative administration that hospital insurance was implemented and, in my opinion, that was another field of exclusive provincial jurisdiction.

Now, the province of Quebec does not want, at this time, to participate in this medicare plan put forward by the central authority, because it claims that it is intended as an interference in a matter under exclusive provincial jurisdiction.

Mr. Speaker, the central government will have to put an end some time to its forays into fields which fall under the exclusive jurisdiction of the provinces as provided in the constitution. Considering that, in some Quebec universities, nearly 60 per cent of our students no longer believe or have confidence in federalism, that they are opposed to federalism precisely because they claim the central government intrudes in matters outside its jurisdiction, in short, considering also that those students will, in the near future, tomorrow, form the leading class of our society, then this is a cause for concern.

I wonder if the co-operative federalism practised by this government really serves the purpose intended at the time that formula of co-operative federalism was discovered. Some complained, and rightly so, that in Quebec blows a wind of independence and separatism; this results from the fact that the federal government, which has too much money, wants on many occasions and without reason to take over some fields of exclusively provincial jurisdiction, and that in Quebec, some prominent people object to that interference and, as I said earlier, no longer believe in our federalism.

And I think that if the government continues in this way to interfere more and more in some fields of provincial jurisdiction, we shall witness more and more a revival of that nationalistic feeling of independence which we have seen in Quebec and which results from the formula introduced by the Lesage administration during the years 1960-65: "Masters in our own home".

If the federal government wants to avoid a further expansion of that movement in Quebec, and in other provinces, he will have to respect the fields of jurisdiction granted to every province by the constitution. And, if

[Mr. Asselin (Charlevoix).]

there is a field of jurisdiction, which is strictly provincial, it is certainly that of health, a field which concerns the human being, and for which the provinces are wholly responsible.

I should like also to call the attention of the minister to clause 8 of the bill. Recently, I read in the newspapers, following a question asked by an hon. member that the minister had shaken his head to indicate that he had no intention of amending clause 8 of the bill.

In my opinion, clause 8 of the bill is punitive and coercive with regard to the provinces which are not ready to participate in the federal medicare plan. In fact, if we do not provide immediately fiscal equalization for the provinces which want to set up their own medicare plan, this is discrimination, because clause 8 of the bill provides that fiscal equalization will not be considered before March 31, 1972.

From 1968 to 1972, the provinces which will not have participated in medicare will lose their tax equalization. This means that Quebec citizens will pay taxes to their province to finance the Quebec private scheme. And those same citizens will also pay taxes to the federal government to finance the implementation of Bill No. C-227, an act authorizing the establishment of a medicare plan.

Now, I maintain that this is discrimination against the provinces which will not immediately participate in this plan and the minister should consider, when this bill is studied in committee, introducing amendments in order to correct this gross injustice set forth in clause 8 and grant tax equalization to provinces which would like to establish immediately their own scheme, so that the citizens of those provinces will not be subjected to double taxation.

These are the comments that I wanted to make concerning the bill before us, Mr. Speaker. Naturally, several reasons were given to postpone its implementation until 1968. I know that this postponement has disappointed many members, including members of the party in office for we could see, at the Liberal convention held in Ottawa about a week and a half ago, that not all Liberal party members supported the views of the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp) concerning the advisability of putting off implementation of the plan. This measure was said to be necessary in order to curb inflation, but obviously, as was put forward a while ago, the