

Supply—Health and Welfare

like the others and he has needs; he often grows up in a needy environment and, later, he will pay taxes for thousands of other children. Consequently, any discrimination against the first born should be rejected.

It is understood that an early change to the family allowances program will increase government expenditure under the Department of National Health. But this increase, under National Health, could be compensated by reductions in other areas, by elimination of waste or by permitting the institution of a provincial lottery.

One fact stands out, in conclusion: The government must take measures to increase family allowances considerably and thus effectively fight poverty through a more equitable distribution of national income. Such is the fundamental requirement of a truly democratic government.

• (4:40 p.m.)

[*English*]

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Chairman, it was not my intention to take part in this debate. However, I noted that the hon. member for Saskatoon seemed to spend most of his time making an attack on the former C.C.F. government in the province of Saskatchewan. He began his speech by saying that he did not want to hold up the estimates. Then he proceeded to make a provocative speech which I think he must have known demanded a reply.

An hon. Member: Resist the temptation.

Mr. Douglas: I do not want to resist the temptation.

Mr. Starr: No willpower.

Mr. Douglas: As a matter of fact, I thought it would be a very good idea if the statements of the hon. member for Saskatoon were drawn to the attention of the people of this country and particularly to the people of the province of Saskatchewan.

The first comment of the hon. member was that the C.C.F. government in Saskatchewan took from 1944 to 1962 to set up medicare. If he was as well qualified as he pretends to be he would have told the committee that the C.C.F. government was elected in Saskatchewan in 1944 on a promise to set up, stage by stage, a comprehensive health insurance program. The medical care program even in 1962 did not constitute the final stage as it does not cover drugs, dental care, glasses or other ancillary services. The hon. member might have pointed out to the committee that one of

the first things the C.C.F. government did in 1944, with a total provincial budget of a little over \$30 million, was to set up completely free care for the mentally ill, both mental in hospitals and psychiatric clinics, followed by the first completely free cancer program covering treatment, deep X-ray therapy, surgery and post-operational care. The provincial government set up completely free health services for the first time in Canada for all assistance groups such as old age pensioners, those receiving mothers' allowances, wards of the government and blind persons.

The province set up in one health region the first completely universal medicare program for all residents of that region, some 65,000 persons, by way of a pilot project as early as July 1, 1945. That plan is still in operation. It provided the statistical data upon which the provincial plan could be based and also provided a good deal of the data which was of use to the Hall Commission. On January 1, 1947, the provincial government set up the first comprehensive hospital insurance program in Canada and on this continent. We in the provincial government made it very clear to the federal government, first Liberal and later Conservative, that if at any time they were prepared to pay a substantial part of the cost we would be able to proceed with comprehensive medicare.

It was not until 1961 that the province felt it had sufficient revenue to proceed with comprehensive medicare, because the entire burden of this program had to be borne by the provincial government. Therefore, for the hon. member for Saskatoon to suggest that there was any delay in implementing the promises of 1944 is either an attempt to mislead the committee or is a woeful betrayal of ignorance. Knowing the hon. gentleman, I can make my own selection.

The second matter he referred to was the question of means tests. He referred to the speech made by the hon. member for Vancouver-Kingsway and said that while the members of the New Democratic party decry means tests, nevertheless in the province of Saskatchewan under the C.C.F. government means tests were retained.

Means tests were retained under the Old Age Assistance Act which provides for a pension to be paid jointly, in part by the federal government and in part by the provincial government. The regulations are laid down by the federal government and under them the provincial government is required