

Medicare

I will suggest to the Minister of National Health and Welfare that he comes from an area where the ratio of doctors to people is so high now that it even surpasses the figure given by the hon. member for Simcoe East, as applying to the whole country, of one doctor to over 2,000 patients.

I was disappointed that the minister did not speak a little longer. Usually he is concise and very logical but—and it is the first time that I can say this of any hon. member opposite—he was too brief on such an important piece of legislation. I do not know whether the reason for his brevity was his disappointment at not speaking at a certain time with some of the people around, or whether it was because of some problems within the hallowed sanctuary of the caucus or of the cabinet—because we never know what goes on in caucus or in cabinet, even though we read the papers, and we read Peter Newman. The fact of the matter is that the Minister of National Health and Welfare was abnormally brief, even though he had the grace to make a short speech.

Usually I make short speeches, but tonight I do not think I will be as brief on this very important topic as was the Minister of National Health and Welfare who, as a member of the house advised the Prime Minister both when he was in office and when he was out of office in the twilight years not too long ago. Those twilight years may return if this government continues to force this bill down people's throats without regard for the opinions of the people at the grass roots level in the area from which the Minister of National Health and Welfare comes, and continues to rely on the opinions of the professors and retired civil servants who dominate hon. members opposite.

I will now deal with the question of co-operative federalism about which we have heard so much in the past two or three years. I will refer to the Minister of National Health and Welfare and also to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration (Mr. Marchand) and the Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp), not because I think they will enter into the debate, like the hon. member for Peterborough did, but perhaps because they would not find too much fault with what I will say. I will ask the Minister of National Health and Welfare who, when in the ivory tower advised the present Prime Minister—and unfortunately too many hon. members on the opposite side are still in their ivory tower—how he could reconcile the compulsory nature of

this legislation with what was done previously in the case of hospital insurance.

As I understand it, Mr. St. Laurent and Mr. Mackenzie King had a formula. Part of the problem in politics today is that there is no demarcation line, and the old rules and traditions and precepts of politics have gone by the board. Mackenzie King, St. Laurent and now Mr. Pearson have all upheld the ideal of co-operative federalism, which is now being done away with. I believe that in the matter of hospital insurance, which is a related subject, the plan was only to be brought into effect if 50 per cent of the population of the provinces agreed to it.

An hon. Member: You are wrong.

Mr. Nowlan: Perhaps the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles) can correct me, but I understand this was the basic guide line which applied to Quebec and Ontario, the two largest provinces of Canada. I think the hon. member for Lotbinière (Mr. Choquette), who seems to have some problems with the lower part of the anatomy of this head—which is most abnormal because normally that part of his system works very well—should be concerned because Quebec and Ontario are the two biggest provinces of this union and yet this plan which involves matters under their jurisdiction is to be rammed down their throats.

I am in agreement with the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) who, when speaking on the resolution, suggested that this government is setting a precedent in the way it is dealing with this legislation for setting guide lines on education. We all know education is a hallowed subject and we are not to discuss it now, but the principle in both cases is the same. If we do not rely on principles in politics, then the disenchantment with this government will continue in this country to the extent that in time hon. members on the left side of the house will be helped.

They would be misguided if they followed this precept. But as far as the principles of the two main parties are concerned, there is a real disenchantment on this side of the house, even though there have been many catcalls from the other side of the house. Even though I may disagree with some of the things which the hon. member for Prince Albert (Mr. Diefenbaker) has said, a good many of the things he has said in the last few years have come about. The hon. member for Wellington South (Mr. Hales) made a speech last night regarding the principles involved in this