

Medicare

because Saskatchewan residents have been saturated with medical service—that they now have been treated for all the ailments that, before medicare, went untreated.

That is one of the things I would like to stress today. It is said that medicare will cost more and more and that doctors are opposed to it. Well, Mr. Speaker, do you know one of the things doctors in Saskatchewan fought the hardest for was to get the right to practice outside the plan? Having secured that right, during the first year of operation in Saskatchewan only 6 per cent of doctors' patients sent in bills separate from the medicare plan. Only 6 per cent of the doctors exercised the option to go outside the plan. Even the doctors are coming around to the idea that medicare is something which is good and valuable for the people of Saskatchewan.

Last evening my colleague from Hamilton South spoke about the costs of administration. In the Saskatchewan plan the cost of administration has been about \$6 out of every \$100, just 6 per cent, but the Hall commission report shows that private insurance plans in Canada use 28 per cent of every dollar for purposes other than direct aid and benefit to patients. To any government that was in earnest about medicare these facts would speak loudly enough for it to implement the scheme. The pilot plan has shown that it works. Nothing is lacking today except the will to proceed with the scheme.

The scheme could have been proceeded with if the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacEachen) had had the strength to stand up against his colleagues in the cabinet and against powerful lobbies across the country. It could still be proceeded with if those in the Liberal party, occupying both back and front benches, could only see the handwriting on the wall before it is too late. I say, and say strongly, that the people of this country want medicare and they don't want it in heaven; they want it now and they are going to get it.

The next place where the government is going to get a very rude jolt is in the Ontario elections when they roll around next spring, because I prophesy now that government members will discover that the people in the province of Ontario are not satisfied with the makeshift medicare plan there which does not incorporate the foundations of universality and complete public administration of the program.

[Mrs. MacInnis (Vancouver-Kingsway).]

I cannot conclude without giving another quotation from the Hall report, a report which has been much bandied about, with bits taken out of it here and there that do not reflect the whole spirit of that report. This is from page 18 of Volume II where Mr. Justice Hall says:

The right to education is one now universally recognized in Canada. It is an entrenched right which no one would dare to challenge. It is now beyond question that all our young people must be better educated and more competently trained if Canada is to survive in this highly competitive age of specialization and automation. It is equally true that health services are as much an investment as education. Health services and education must now be regarded as twin endeavours, advancing mankind. Neither will attain its full potential for good if one is allowed to lag behind the other. Progress in one must be paralleled by progress in the other. The fruits of this progress must be available to all—not just to those whose incomes are high enough to pay the premiums demanded to provide coverage against expenditures for physicians services alone, but to everyone, and for the whole range of health services, including hospital care, dentistry, drugs, home nursing, and optical services.

I say that that also includes optometrists, chiropractors and other health service people who are not yet being let in under the wire of the physicians' profession. This is what Mr. Justice Hall has recommended, and I firmly believe that the people of Canada are determined to have medicare and will not wait for it forever. After what has happened, their feeling now is that they have been duped once more.

• (2:30 p.m.)

If the government is not going to give it to them, then they will elect a government that will. In my province we have a premier who manages to do quite well about staying in office. Before elections he opposes new policies violently and says they are impractical. Then he turns around when he sees the strength of the opposition and spends his time implementing the impossible policies of his opponents in order that they will not replace him at the next election. I commend this recipe for longevity to hon. gentlemen and the hon. lady opposite. Unless they implement medicare and get it into operation very shortly their chances for survival not only as the government but as a party across this country are very bleak indeed.

Mr. Melvin McQuaid (Kings): Mr. Speaker, I suppose it would be rather academic at this time to discuss the fact that the medicare program has been delayed. I am prepared to accept the government's word that there are