

Hon. Mr. Macdonald: Or whether old age pensions came into effect in 1926 in that manner.

Hon. Mr. Croll: No. One province waited four years, and another waited nine years.

Hon. Mr. Macdonald: But what the honourable senator from Ottawa asks is, if we ever passed legislation which enabled the Government to enter into agreements in the future?

Hon. Mr. Lambert: That is right—anticipatory legislation.

Hon. Mr. Macdonald: I should think we did that in the case of old age pensions legislation. My recollection is that all the provinces did not come into the plan at the same time.

Hon. J. Wesley Stambaugh: Honourable senators, may I direct a question to the Leader of the Government? With regard to the amount of the payment that will be made by the federal Government, will the amount be half of what the patient pays or half of the hospital costs? Now, I will explain that a little bit. I am a member of a hospital board. We charge the patient only \$1 a day but the actual cost to the hospital district is over \$7 a day, and the difference between the \$7 and the \$1 is made up by taxation of the people in that hospital district. What I would like to know is if that hospital will receive half of the \$7 or half of the \$1?

Hon. Mr. Macdonald: If the hospital charges the patient then the province will not get a share.

Hon. Mr. Stambaugh: Will the taxpayer in that hospital district still have to make up that \$6 or will a part of that be paid by the federal Government? That is the question.

Hon. Mr. Macdonald: If the patient is charged \$7 a day and it cost the hospital \$13, then the province would get a share of the \$6.

Hon. Mr. Stambaugh: That does not answer the question at all.

Hon. David A. Croll: Honourable senators, I cannot add very much to the excellent detail presentation which the Leader of the Government in the Senate (Hon. Mr. Macdonald) has given us. Yet because of my long association with the objectives of this bill I feel compelled to make a few comments and some observations. They will be of a more general nature.

Passage of this bill is, in my judgment, the most important social welfare achievement of this Twenty-Second Parliament. It has been one of the most important items of unfinished business on our calendar; and, as far as Liberals are concerned, it has been

on our conscience for a great many years. Throughout the period of my own participation in public life it has been an active public issue, an unsolved problem. I have spoken on the subject hundreds of times, in and out of the House of Commons. My first speech in the Senate, on January 18, 1956, dealt with the national health program which I hoped would be brought in soon to complete the magnificent program of social security legislation planned and carried out by the Liberal Government.

The groundwork was commenced on May 14, 1948, under the national health grants, and it has brought forward this measure which is by far the most important social advancement in a decade.

Now, at last, after years of waiting, we are finding in this bill an important part of the solution of the problem. For that, every member of this Twenty-Second Parliament has the right to feel a real measure of satisfaction. More particularly it is to the credit of the Government as a whole, and to the Prime Minister and leader of the Liberal party, that this important advance in social progress is now being made.

But more than to any other individual in the Government and in this Parliament, credit and praise for this achievement must be given to the Honourable Paul Martin, Minister of National Health and Welfare. He, more than any other single person, has brought this about. In all the years of his service as minister of the department he has persisted in his purpose. He has never lost sight of his objective. Through many periods of discouragement and delay he has continued to fight for what he believed in; and the result, in the form of this present measure, must give him abundant satisfaction.

There have been many Ministers of Health down through the years since 1920, when that department was established. Many of them have been interested in the achievement of health insurance. But it took Paul Martin, with his tireless energy and persistent dedication to a cause in which he steadfastly believed, to accomplish in 1957 what others before him had tried without success to achieve.

The honourable Leader of the Government has mentioned that the total cost involved is approximately \$400 million, which is to be shared on a 50-50 basis by the dominion and the provinces.

It is interesting to note the movement—the precipitate movement—of public opinion. The Gallup poll indicates that in 1956, 62 per cent, and in 1957, 72 per cent of the people of Canada were in favour of a health plan paid for by taxes. It is also interesting