

Medicare

to a dominion-provincial conference that the government would in fact contribute to a nation-wide medical insurance plan.

In September of that year Mr. Norman Phillipps, a top-flight reporter, now unhappily deceased, had an article in the *Star* under a banner headline which read, "Medicare By '67 Appears Almost Certain." Also in September we had the announcement of the election, and on October 13 the then minister of national health and welfare, when she opened her campaign, announced in clear, positive and no doubt ringing tones—I was not there, Mr. Speaker—that the date for coming into effect of the government's medicare plan would be July 1, 1967.

On November 1 the same minister, who presumably spoke for the government on this matter at that time, speaking in French, English and Italian at Montreal, pledged the Liberal party to the introduction of medicare. "This government," she said, "will lay aside the fear all have of crippling expenses for medical care."

Perhaps most significant of all was the statement made by the Prime Minister in Hamilton during the campaign:

In 1963 I promised a Liberal government, as the economy expanded towards full employment, would take steps to provide Canadians with medicare . . . Well, we have our expansion and we have placed our national medicare proposals before the provinces, and we have set a deadline of July 1st, 1967 to start the program, and we'll do it.

Perhaps I cannot reproduce the eloquence of the Prime Minister on the hustings, but if words mean anything the meaning of this was a clear pledge by the Prime Minister, in a most dramatic way, that "this is the date, and we'll do it."

I ask you, Mr. Speaker, to note the difference between what I might call the Pearson doctrine on medicare and the Sharp doctrine. The Prime Minister said we could not have a medicare program in 1963 because we did not have full employment, because we had a recession, but as soon as it was over his government would introduce such a program. The Minister of Finance (Mr. Sharp) comes along later and says: we have expansion in 1966 and it may well be that we will have the danger of inflation; therefore because of expansion we must postpone medicare.

I suppose in 1968 we may have another recession and then the Pearson doctrine that we cannot do it in a recession will come in again, and with an expansion in 1969 the Sharp doctrine will come into effect, which will say we cannot do it then either. The

[Mr. Brewin.]

people of Canada are somewhat in the position of Alice in Wonderland who, in Lewis Carroll's famous words, said, "Always jam tomorrow but never jam today." One of my colleagues says the Liberals are always in a jam. That is a pun I would not have perpetrated personally.

Private members on the Liberal side, encouraged by their leaders, made medicare by July 1, 1967 a central plank in their campaigns. I know that my own Liberal opponent, a distinguished gentleman named Martin O'Connell, I think very much in the confidence of his own party, campaigned on the basis that if his constituents wanted medicare and wanted it promptly then they must vote Liberal and vote for him and not for any other party. I do not know whether Mr. O'Connell, if elected, would have stood by his guns or caved in like some other members have done.

The hon. member for Hamilton West (Mr. Macaluso) is quoted as saying, and I do not doubt his sincerity:

I discussed it (medicare) at every campaign meeting. I was elected to put it into effect. I'm committed to it.

The hon. member for Verdun (Mr. Mackasey), who I believe is chairman of the Liberal party caucus, is quoted as saying:

It (medicare) was second only to national unity in my campaign. I am a great believer in medicare as Mr. Pearson outlined it last July—

Incidentally, with a target date of July 1, 1967.

I won't tolerate any watering down.

Mr. Woolliams: Who said that?

Mr. Brewin: The hon. member for Verdun, the chairman of the Liberal party caucus. He said he was not going to tolerate any watering down, but there were other voices, influential voices, which even during the election campaign created doubt as to the determination of the Liberal party, and these voices have prevailed.

● (4:30 p.m.)

On November 5 last the present Minister of Finance is reported as having said that the shortage of doctors and nurses could delay the Liberal government's hope to introduce a national medicare plan by July 1, 1967. I quote his words:

I don't know if we'll be able to reach that target. In any case, it is better to have a target date than a mere promise.