

Medicare

of some of the arguments we have put forward. I tell him right here and now that so far as the hon. member for Kamloops (Mr. Fulton) is concerned, I am not too far away from his thinking. I can morally vote against the bill as it stands, if the government does not accept our amendment, and can certainly make my position clear so far as my constituents and the people generally are concerned.

Can we not have universality without compulsion? Certainly we can. Can we have a comprehensive plan without compulsion? Certainly we can, and hon. members opposite know it. I give the minister credit here because I believe he is changing his views slightly in this regard. I do not say that in a deprecating way but, if he will allow me to do so, in a flattering way.

I do not know why so much concern was expressed by the previous speaker, in view of the fact that we will have to wait such a long time before the plan is instituted. Hon. members opposite will be lucky if every province does not have such a plan by that time. I know there are a few provinces which are not in a fortunate enough position economically to institute such a plan.

Mr. Haidasz: What is the target date of your plan?

Mr. Winkler: If the hon. member had listened to us he would know that for 30 per cent of the people who need it would be January 1, 1967. Let there be no mistake about that.

• (1:30 p.m.)

Subparagraph (d) of the amendment reads:

(d) immediately provides for those persons who are unable, for financial reasons, to provide medical services for themselves.

We mean that. As a matter of fact, the hon. member may well justify his position as a doctor by supporting this amendment, and I think he knows it. When the hon. member tells me that he hears a lot of complaints from his constituents about the diversification of the various plans now in effect, the inequality of coverage, the difference in premiums and so on, let me tell him one thing. I come from a rural constituency which also has a reasonable amount of manufacturing industry. I have worked in that industry and I have been a member of their union. These men are telling me: "15 years ago our pay cheques used to have a little stub at the end showing deductions. Now our pay cheques have still another deduction. Tell the government to keep our pay cheques and tell us

[Mr. Winkler.]

how much we can spend." That is the state to which you have brought these people. These people have bargained for some of the medical protection they now have. I am not so sure they want the plan that is now being offered.

I also find there is a great deal of reason behind the thinking in the province of Ontario because I do not believe anyone in the house will deny the fact that the taxpayers of the provinces of Ontario carry a substantial burden in this country. I have said this before and I say it again with pride. They are prepared to say: "All right, put your plan into effect. Give the provinces the rights that are constitutionally theirs, but for heaven's sake do not make us pay for something we do not want." I think the hon. member subscribes to that very statement, unless I am wrong, but of course all members on that side of the house will stand up and vote for the bill whether it is right or wrong.

I believe that the principle of freedom of choice in the plan is an extremely important one, and I say that with all deference to the people in the profession as well as to those who will be covered by the terms of this bill.

Furthermore, I hope I do not have to remind any member of the house of the effort and time spent in trying to bring the government and the minister to the realization that the necessity for increasing old age security pensions at this time is equally important. It may be even more so when we realize we have to wait for two years for this piece of legislation to become effective at a time when the people who need additional money because of inflationary trends—I do not have to remind you who is responsible for them—require this money for the basic necessities of life. I believe that my friend, the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles), will join me in our combined fight for increases in old age security payments. I do not think he has changed his view and I certainly have not changed mine.

Mr. Haidasz: Your filibuster is only prolonging the delay.

Mr. Winkler: I remind the hon. member that it will be pretty difficult for us to talk for two years. You do not have to worry about that. If the hon. member is referring to increased old age security payments, then let his party postpone this bill and we will give them our approval in a hurry. I can assure him of the support of our caucus for that piece of legislation.