

to show how this so-called voluntary medicare plan works:

It must come as a shock to many people, but a pensioner living solely on \$75 does not automatically qualify for provincial medicare. This is the government scheme subsidized by doctors to help the needy elderly.

It would be taken for granted that a person living on \$75 would be welcomed and encouraged to receive free medicare.

The fact is that old people today with nothing else but their federal pension of \$75 a month are being rejected by the province for free medicare. If the test, which is unrealistically calculated, determines he is getting by, the pensioner must pay for his own medical coverage.

The provincial government uses its scale of social allowances as a yardstick for extra aid to those getting the federal pension of \$75.

Under this scale, for a single person living alone, the following is allowed: \$26 for food; \$10 for household and personal needs; \$5 for clothing; \$5 for health costs. Rents vary with the need, with up to \$35 allowed for a heated room; \$25 for an unheated room, plus extra for utilities.

The person on \$75 does not qualify for medicare if he cannot prove that his costs for rent, utilities and special needs bring it above \$75.

Now, Mr. Speaker, that is the voluntary medicare which the Conservative opposition in this parliament and the Conservative premier of Manitoba not only are thinking about but have implemented, and I suggest it is completely unacceptable.

We believe that what this country needs is a universal, comprehensive medical insurance plan, and we believe that it should start now, as this government and its spokesmen repeated ad nauseam as their platform in every city in this country for the last two or three years.

If I had any doubts that I was right in my belief that this plan should be implemented on July 1, 1967 as was proposed initially by the Liberals, they would have been dispelled by the letter which I received today from the city clerk of the city of Winnipeg. Although that city council has more N.D.P. aldermen than most cities, the substantial majority is made up of Liberal and Conservative members of the council, as are most councils in this country. Nevertheless it passed a resolution on October 11, part of which is as follows:

Whereas the government of Canada, which had undertaken to inaugurate a universal, national medicare plan on July 1, 1967, has announced a delay of one year in implementing such a plan; And whereas the Manitoba government has failed to support a universal plan of medicare; Therefore be it resolved that this council urge the government of Canada and the Manitoba government to press forward with government medical insurance on a universal basis as outlined in the Hall report, beginning July 1, 1967.

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Medicare

The council of the city of Winnipeg knows what the people of that city want, and the same is true of the people of Canada. They want medicare and they want it now.

Mr. Speaker, we support this plan and this legislation. We will vote for this bill as it is on the order paper today. We are completely opposed, first of all, to the killer amendment which emasculates the whole bill; we are also opposed to the whole concept of universal medicare as proposed by the official opposition, and we are opposed to the amendments which I am sure the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacEachen) will be bringing in with a great deal of regret, and under a great deal of pressure, to delay the implementation of this plan to July 1, 1968.

Having said that, I want to spend a little time commiserating with the Minister of National Health and Welfare for the extremely unpleasant position in which he finds himself. I want to say to him and to the hon. member for York-Scarborough (Mr. Stanbury), who had to express his public penance yesterday by supporting what a week or two ago he was opposing so bitterly at Peterborough, that we believe there is no reason for the delay in the implementation of this legislation.

For years we have urged governments to go ahead with such a plan. As I said earlier, the C.C.F. government of Saskatchewan introduced such a plan, which is working so well that the present Liberal premier, who is dead set against socialism or what he considers to be socialism, has not dared to oppose the bill or to change it as one would have expected him to do.

I am curious, as I am sure are other people of Canada, as to why this government reneged on its promise made so often and so eloquently to go ahead with medicare on July 1, 1967. I will not place all the relevant quotes on the record, because I would need weeks, not days, to put on the record everything which every Liberal candidate said. I suppose the government could say with justification that they are really not responsible for some of the irresponsible and less knowledgeable things which some Liberal candidate in some backwoods constituency might have said; however, Mr. Speaker, that promise was made by the head of the Liberal party, by the Prime Minister. It was also made by the Minister of National Health and Welfare, by parliamentary secretaries and by other ministers, and it is very clear, plain and precise. There were no if's, but's and maybe's.