

Mr. Speaker, Bill C-68 aims at controlling the annual per capita cost increase of services provided under the health insurance or the medical insurance plan. In short, Mr. Speaker, the government wants to ration medical services under the pretext that they are too expensive. It is not because Canadians do not need health care, but because this care costs too much. It is not because Canadians are all in good health, but once again because the services are too expensive.

Mr. Speaker, a proverb says that good health is the greatest of riches. But the government says: Good health is fine, but only if it is not too expensive. This, in effect, Mr. Speaker, is what the government is saying to Canadians by introducing a bill such as this one.

The Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. Lalonde) said so very clearly in a speech he gave on September 15 last before the Richelieu Club of Montreal, when he stated:

The expansion rates of certain services, including those of the health care industry, are now above our means.

Mr. Speaker, the government therefore feels that it cannot afford to allow medical care to develop according to the needs of the Canadian people. All those who have studied this bill are concerned because they know that financial restrictions in this area will automatically affect the quality and quantity of medical care needed by Canadians.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker, here is what Dr. Grisdale, chairman of the Canadian Medical Association, stated to the Minister of National Health and Welfare in a letter written on December 10 last. He wrote and I translate as follows: Must we now consider that the main priority of the medicare program is now financial and that in the future, the program will be modeled according to financial requirements of the time and not according to medical criteria?

Mr. Speaker, I am convinced that this fear is shared not only by doctors but also all Canadians, and yet the government thinks it will contribute to right the present economic situation with Bill C-68. It hopes that by cutting down the expenditures made in the area of medical care, it will solve the problems that paralyze the economy of this country. In fact, the main effect of this legislation could be to make the area of medical care as disorganized and as badly off as the economic area.

Again, Mr. Speaker, the government does not see the real problem. It does not see the primary cause of all present difficulties. Yet, that cause is as visible and obvious as an elephant in a living room. The real cause of present difficulties lies in the economic and financial system in which we live.

Until the government is prepared to reform the present system, it will be faced with an unsurmountable obstacle. It is not by reducing health services that the government will improve the economic system. Nor is it by controlling prices and salaries with an army of public servants paid \$50,000 a year that the government will solve the problem of inflation. Nor is it, Mr. Speaker, by letting hundreds of businesses go bankrupt that the government will improve the situation. No, Mr. Speaker. If the government really wants to solve the problems upsetting our economy, it will have to come to grips with the roots of the illness—the

Medical Care Act

monetary and financial system. Mr. Speaker, Social Crediters never hesitated to make their solutions known.

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Ever since Social Crediters came to the House, the government never had any excuses for its lack of action. The government certainly realized that as long as there will be a gap between available production and the consumers' purchasing power, the economic system will remain wrong. The Social Crediters say that the purchasing power of the people should be increased so they can get the available goods and services, particularly health services and goods. Mr. Speaker, I mean available goods and services.

Indeed, no one would dare say that here, in Canada, we do not have the technical means to provide all Canadian citizens with first class medical care, according to everyone's needs. We have doctors, and on this subject, I would like to add something. We have doctors, but not everywhere. In the major areas, yes. But in areas like ours, no. We also have hospitals, as well as technology and drugs. What is missing, Mr. Speaker? As the minister said, we are short of money. It is not because of a shortage of doctors that the health minister wants to reduce medical care in Canada. The reason is not a lack of drugs either. It is just that he finds it too expensive. He believes that we cannot afford it. We could ask ourselves about the logic of such a reasoning. We have everything we need as far as competence, technology and drugs are concerned. However, we shall have to do without medical care. Why, Mr. Speaker? Because the minister tells us we do not have enough money.

The Social Crediters say that purchasing power, and availability of money must correspond to our physical capacity, our technical or physical means. A system in which we deprive people of medical care under the pretext that money is scarce is absolutely ridiculous. However, this is what this minister proposes. He says that it is too expensive, that we have to restrain the extension of medical care even if doctors say that they could not give more care than they do now.

If we have the technical means and the doctors required to give a better service—and, as I said earlier, in some areas like larger centres there are doctors—the financial system should serve man and meet his needs according to our actual capacities and not our financial capacities. The Social Crediters want the financial system to be at the disposal of man and not the reverse. This makes the whole difference between the program of this government and the program of the Social Credit. This government does not want to change our financial system and prefers reduced medical care. They would rather attack the production system and drive companies to bankruptcy. And all this because it is too expensive for the financial system.

Mr. Speaker, I think that this government should consider seriously what Social Crediters have been proposing for several years. If the government changes the financial system it could solve the problems there are in that field and in the field of medical care. This problem is particularly acute in areas distant from larger centres. In fact, Mr. Speaker, it is very difficult for remote areas like Abitibi, Témiscamingue, Lac Saint-Jean, and the Gaspé Peninsula to get doctors. For instance, Mr. Speaker, I heard the