

Medicare

important consideration, for others it is education or sectors of the economy. But the present federal government disregards all this. It wants to pass legislation on a national scale with regard to the economy and in all other fields, which is contrary and destructive to the principle of federalism and which emphasizes disunion and pressures in the country. The government is responsible for this. It does this with a sort of unconcern which is entirely reprehensible.

I say it is an extension of co-operative federalism, of centralization. It is another example of the famous co-operative federalism some members of the government talk about in various parts of the country.

Mr. Speaker, in 1919 Ottawa first passed an act to help fight venereal diseases and create a public health department. Then, in 1944, the federal government established the Department of National Health and Welfare. Followed in 1948 a national hygiene and health program providing 13 subsidies. Later, in 1957, it passed the act on hospital insurance. Those are all matters belonging to the field of health and social welfare which, according to the spirit of the constitution, were to fall exclusively within provincial jurisdiction.

And this is extended further today; naturally, the tentacles reach further. Now we have medicare. Co-operative federalism has become, facts prove it, coercive federalism. Four conditions are laid down, then the provinces are told: accept that, launch your own medicare program, and we will pay so much provided you meet our four requirements. Well, that is not co-operation; it is trespassing, coercion.

Moreover, it is not true that the federal government can spend as it sees fit. It must have sufficient revenues to provide for its responsibilities and jurisdiction as outlined, amongst others, in section 91 of the constitution. But it is erroneous and malevolent to maintain that the government in Ottawa can levy most of the taxes in Canada, spend the money according to its own wishes and invade provincial fields of administration. The interest the federal government may have in a problem does not allow it to legislate on such matters as are the express responsibility of another government.

The present federal government is concerned about health and sickness problems in Canada. But other governments have dealt with those problems before, namely in Saskatchewan and Ontario. Just because the

federal government decides one fine day to do something about it, because its coffers are full while those of provincial governments are almost empty, does not give it the right to meddle with problems which fall within provincial jurisdiction and responsibility. Interest in the matter does not create a right.

[English]

Mr. Winch: May I ask a question of the hon. member? Does he think the provinces to which he has referred would object because the federal government, as a result of its interest in health, through ancillary legislation paid half the cost of maintaining the good health of their citizens, as I understand this bill seeks to do?

Mr. Allard: Would the hon. member repeat his question? I had a bad translation here.

Mr. Winch: In view of the hon. member's remarks relating to the lack of authority of the federal government in this field, and in view of the national interest in health, does the hon. member feel the provinces he mentioned would object to the federal government paying half the cost of maintaining the health of the citizens of those provinces? Would you object, or do you think the provinces would object?

[Translation]

Mr. Allard: Mr. Speaker, I cannot understand very well what the hon. member wants to say by relying on the interpretation. It might be better for me to listen first to what he has to say in his mother tongue, if he is kind enough to repeat his question in English.

[English]

Mr. Winch: In view of what the hon. member said before I took it that he was objecting to the federal interest in the health of the people because that comes within provincial jurisdiction. Does the hon. member consider that there should be objection by the provinces when the federal authority, in an ancillary manner, is prepared to pay half the cost of the medical requirements of the citizens of a province? Does he object, as well as expressing the view that perhaps the provinces would object to this financial assistance?

● (12:30 p.m.)

[Translation]

Mr. Allard: Yes, Mr. Speaker, I explained a while ago that I object to this measure simply because the federal government does not give back to the provinces an adequate share of the amounts collected in these taxation fields.