

Medicare

I admitted to some uncertainty as to whether the principle of this bill was being supported or rejected by the official opposition. I received assurances at that time that the official opposition had had in its platform for some time a program of medicare, and wholeheartedly supported the principle of this bill.

When the hon. member for Simcoe East (Mr. Rynard) began his remarks today I thought he was confirming that resolve on behalf of the official opposition, to see that medicare was introduced at the earliest possible moment. The hon. member began by asking, "Why not July 1, 1967?" Indeed, I might have asked the same question a few weeks ago. But he went on to tell us all the reasons why medicare could not be implemented in the foreseeable future in the view of the official opposition, and concluded by moving an amendment to the bill which even a novice parliamentarian like myself knows does not have any effect but to kill the bill. Is that the intention of the official opposition—to kill medicare?

Mr. Fulton: Yes—this bill which has been killed by the government already.

Mr. Stanbury: Apparently that is so.

Mr. Webb: It is to get it going.

Mr. Fulton: Why not bury it?

Mr. Stanbury: Now I come to the comments of the hon. member for Winnipeg South Centre.

Mr. Knowles: North Centre.

Mr. Stanbury: Yes, the comments of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre (Mr. Knowles). I appreciate the credit he gave to me as one of the proponents of medicare. But I must say I was very disappointed at his remarks because it seemed to me that instead of directing his attention to the merits of this measure, he devoted most of his time to belabouring the minister and heaping ridicule, satire and cynicism on the head of the minister and the government.

Mr. Knowles: And scorn.

Mr. Stanbury: And scorn. He has developed great expertise in that during the many years in which he has been in the house. He thundered through without really directing his attention, except very briefly, to the merits of the bill. My impression is that his greatest disappointment was in the fact that this government would be the one to put on the statute books of Canada a medicare plan for all the people of Canada.

[Mr. Stanbury.]

• (8:30 p.m.)

Mr. Knowles: When?

Mr. Stanbury: I suggest it will be a great deal sooner because this government is in office than it would have been otherwise.

One of the things that disappointed me in the remarks of the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre was the threat, not just implicit but explicit, that the members of his party were prepared and in fact threatening to conduct a filibuster to the extent of their ability with 21 members in the house.

Mr. Orlikow: How will that affect us if we have to wait until 1968?

Mr. Stanbury: Members of the N.D.P. are never concerned—

Mr. Orlikow: Tell us about Peterborough.

Mr. Stanbury:—about taking the time of the house, or making interruptions; but apparently even in this case they feel it necessary to delay the passage of this bill as long as possible.

Mr. Orlikow: How will that hurt?

Mr. Stanbury: My hon. friend asks how it will hurt. He knows that this house is waiting to deal with all kinds of important legislation, and I am not putting this legislation behind any that is awaiting our attention. This house and this country are waiting to deal with legislation on guaranteed income for the aged, on immigration, on defence and other important matters with which I think most members of this house would like to get ahead—even members of the official opposition. In spite of this the N.D.P. has threatened us tonight that each one of their 21 members in this house will speak, and if past performance is any guide they will repeat each other 21 times, until this house has exhausted its patience with them and perhaps until the country has exhausted its patience with the N.D.P.

Mr. Orlikow: Check the Gallup poll and see with whom their patience is exhausted.

Mr. Stanbury: If every member of the N.D.P. were to speak in this debate I wonder whether the Gallup poll would be as encouraging to their party as they think it is tonight. The hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre accuses this party, of which I am a member, of being in the dead centre or, as he put it so colourfully, in the centre, dead. I suggest to the hon. member that some people refer to