

Medicare

which have overruled the laudable aims and promises of the Prime Minister and of every Liberal candidate, because the bill now before us will not institute a universal plan.

I disagree particularly with the provision of the bill which puts medicare on a compulsory basis, because Canadians are not prepared to accept compulsion. We have observed some evidence to that effect as a result of the Canada Pension Plan. The Canadian people are resentful of compulsion. In spite of my belief in this regard, and because I believe in the principle of medicare, I will support this bill on second reading.

The hon. member for Simcoe East (Mr. Rynard) proposed the amendment before us because we believe in medicare and hope to improve the bill now before us. A great deal of criticism has been made of this amendment. I do not know why that should be, except perhaps because those who have levied the criticism are playing politics.

What is wrong with the first part of the amendment which states that the government should secure the co-operation of the governments of the provinces of Canada? If the plan is going to be universal it is important that all provinces institute a valid program to cover their residents. In that way only can it be a universal plan. Naturally we need the co-operation of the provinces, which is something the present government does not have.

The second part of the amendment refers to a recognition of the principle of voluntary choice by the individual. It is my belief that if the government does not accept that principle it will be making a mistake. In spite of any mistake it might make in this regard I will support and vote for this bill on second reading.

Third, the amendment suggests that we should make adequate prior provision for sufficient medical research and the training of adequate numbers of doctors and other personnel in order that we may provide the care and attention that people will need under the coverage of a universal plan.

The fourth part of the amendment suggests that the bill should immediately provide for those individuals who are unable for financial reasons to provide medical services for themselves. Are these people in the various provinces to wait until July 1, 1968 before they are covered? If they must wait until then, they wait because of a whim on the part of this government.

[Mr. Starr.]

It is utter nonsense on the part of anyone to suggest that because we support this amendment as an improvement to the bill now before us we are against medicare. Surely we are here to put forward suggestions as to how to improve legislation brought forward by the government. We have merely suggested some alternatives to what the government has brought forward in an effort to improve this bill to the benefit of those who will be covered. I am sure that it would be more readily acceptable in the form we have suggested. That is why we have put forward the amendment. It was not proposed for the purpose, as has been suggested, of killing this bill in opposition to the principle of medicare.

Mr. McIlraith: Mr. Speaker, I wonder whether the hon. member would permit me to ask for the unanimous consent of the house to revert to motions in order to permit the Prime Minister to make a statement.

Mr. Peters: Will the minister agree to a recess between seven and eight o'clock after the Prime Minister's statement?

Mr. McIlraith: I do not think that suggestion is agreeable at this time because we are trying to get this very important legislation through.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Yet it does not come into effect for a year and a half.

• (6:00 p.m.)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Does the house give unanimous consent to revert to motions?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Peters: No.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I will ask the question again. Is there unanimous consent to revert to motions?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. Peters: If we do, we should have some indication that we will have a dinner hour afterwards, Mr. Speaker.

An hon. Member: Make it seven o'clock.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: I will repeat the question. Is there unanimous consent to revert to motions?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.