

Health and Welfare

Perhaps this is the case of my own province which has not yet been caught up by medicare. Some may feel that the provincial treasury cannot for the time being absorb the whole cost of that legislation and that besides patients must pay part of the cost. Of course, there are two schools of thought in this connection, Mr. Chairman. Some people say that the health of Canadians is a human asset which should be the concern of every Canadian and that all citizens must contribute to its conservation, as they contribute to the preservation of our natural resources. This is a just and commendable idea, Mr. Chairman. Other provinces, however, express a different viewpoint and say that the paying potential of each individual and the taxing capacity of each province must be taken into account.

At any rate, Mr. Speaker, we have to recognize, in my opinion, that under such circumstances, in the majority of the provinces, such an interference, such a minute legislation on the part of the federal government, even though its motives and its concern were quite commendable, would be considered wrong and would not be accepted.

I would add, Mr. Speaker, that the notice of motion presented by the hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre surprises me. I will go back to my earlier remarks but I want first to suggest, in a very constructive manner, to the hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre, that he is knocking on the wrong door. Since his concern is commendable and acceptable, he should knock on the door of the provincial governments. There must be, in his own province, a number of people who share his political philosophy and if he were to knock on the door of his provincial government, he would probably have more chance to get quicker results with regard to his proposal to this house. He should perhaps get a little more active in the election campaign and, eventually, take office in his province, so that this legislation could be implemented. At any rate, in view of the fact that the New Democratic party is not very strong in our province of Quebec, we, the Liberals, shall try on the long run to bring our provincial government to reason with regard to national health.

Mr. Chairman, I am coming back to what I said earlier. I think that the notice of motion of our colleague is inconsistent with certain well-known views of his party. In the past, for example, I was one of those who knew quite well Mr. Robert Cliche, chief of the Quebec wing of the N.D.P. I am always very interested in his political activities and I have

always had much respect for the former leader of the N.D.P., Mr. Tommy Douglas. I have heard his speeches for many years and I note that there is some misunderstanding. Mr. Cliche, for example, advocates the decentralization of administrations, especially in the health and welfare fields. If the federal government would bring out such a legislation asking the province not to charge any other fees, we would immediately hear the shrill protests of the leader of the Quebec wing of the N.D.P.

That might be sufficient to make him give up the leadership of the provincial New Democratic party, because, apparently, he has a tendency lately to lean towards the M.S.A., Mr. René Levesque's movement. In fact, if I were the chief of the New Democratic party, I would be concerned with his attitudes and I would make a point of inviting him to Ottawa for a talk, because he also has ambiguous attitudes.

While Mr. Tommy Douglas has told us many times, in public statements, that he wanted a strong federal government, and, in other occasions, that he was in favour of a special status for Quebec, he was torn between two worries: that of granting to Quebec powers that it does not already have, and of ensuring at the same time a strong government in a number of fields.

Therefore, I say there is a certain amount of confusion therein. I realize the hon. member for Regina-Lake Centre, who is new in the house, has not had like us the opportunity to analyse all the attitudes, all the positions taken by the leaders of his party, but my feeling is that his present notice of motion must sound false to those who have followed the course of events. In concluding Mr. Speaker I shall add that his notice of motion is far too rigid; I shall call this "legislo-mania". There are all kinds of manias. For instance, we have referred to Trudeaumania. Well, in this case it is Providence which wanted that state of mind to suddenly emerge in Canada—

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Mr. Mongrain: —in 1968, a state of mind which seems to bring about an improvement in the physical and mental health of some people. You only have to look at the faces of those who sit on the front benches of the opposition in this house. It is a happy state of mind and nobody died as a result. On the contrary, everyone felt stimulated to act constructively.