

Medicare

definition of insured services. The minister objected to it on a point of order on the ground that the amendment offered was beyond the scope of the terms of the resolution which only covered medical services. You, sir, sustained the point of order and ruled the amendment out of order.

The official opposition would now like to offer a further amendment to this clause which we submit is within the terms of the resolution. I think it will be appreciated by the committee that the resolution did not define "services" beyond saying that they were medical care services. Therefore it seems to me that it is within the competence of the committee on behalf of parliament to say what is meant by medical care services. The minister has suggested that medical care services obviously means only services rendered by a medical practitioner, that is to say, a qualified doctor. However, it has been pointed out that it is common practice for qualified doctors to refer patients for treatment by others who are engaged in the healing arts. Therefore what surely should be embraced within the compass of this bill, and certainly within the terms of the resolution, is all services rendered by medical practitioners themselves, or—on their advice or with their consent—by others. Surely it could not be objected that a service rendered, shall we say, by a dental surgeon upon the advice of a medical practitioner and with his co-operation and presence—as frequently may be the case in the operating room, is not a medical service.

Therefore, seconded by the hon. member for Saskatoon, I propose the following amendment:

That paragraph (d) of clause 2 of Bill C-227 be amended by inserting immediately after the words "medical practitioners" in line 18 thereof, the following words: "or by or on the advice or with the consent of medical practitioners".

I will not pose as an expert or attempt to draw the line as to precisely what forms of ancillary services may be rendered by or on the advice or with the consent of medical practitioners, but I do submit that it is beyond any doubt that such services are included within the meaning of the term "medical services". Whether they include services rendered as a result of referrals, say to psychologists or to dental surgeons or, with the subsequent approval of the medical practitioner, by optometrists, it can hardly be argued that these are not medical care services.

Again I submit to you, sir, that if a point of order is raised that this is not precisely included within the words of the resolution the

argument will not be applicable in this case because in the bill now before the house the minister has submitted a definition of the term "insured services". In other words, he has admitted that the services contemplated by the resolution require definition, as of course they do.

I submit to you, sir, that it is not for the minister to say that he alone is qualified to define services nor, as you pointed out earlier, is it for the Chair to say what parliament should include in the definition of "services". This is a matter for parliament to determine. However, the moment it is admitted that the word "services" requires definition, then it is open to the committee to submit its opinion on what should be included in that definition. Therefore I submit that the amendment is not only in order but is indeed within the spirit and requirements of the bill.

The Chairman: I will read the amendment for the benefit of hon. members who do not have a copy of it. It is moved by Mr. Fulton "that paragraph (d) of clause 2 of Bill C-227 be amended by inserting immediately after the words "medical practitioners" in line 18 thereof the following words: "or by or on the advice or with the consent of medical practitioners".

● (8:10 p.m.)

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Chairman, I merely wish to raise the point of order which I raised earlier, because the amendment moved by the hon. member for Kamloops seeks, in a different paragraph and with different words, to do exactly what was sought by the hon. member for Hamilton South. If it be true that parliament is free to define the services within the context of this paragraph, it must be borne in mind that a definition may not go beyond the services for which contributions were sought in the original royal recommendation.

What my hon. friend is saying is that if a medical doctor tells a patient to go to a chiropractor or to go to an optometrist or to go to any other person in the health professions, then, of course, this is an insured service and therefore eligible for contributions. This raises precisely the same point as that raised in the amendment of the hon. member for Hamilton South and this amendment is deficient for exactly the same reasons. If this amendment were accepted and ruled in order it would achieve what was held to be impossible in the amendment moved by the hon. member for Hamilton South.