

Medicare

invites you, Mr. Chairman, to accept his interpretation of what he meant or what he says he meant, and insists that not only must you accept his interpretation, but you must rule that what we say is a proper definition goes beyond the meaning of the resolution.

Again I remind you, Mr. Chairman, that the resolution does not mention or define "medical practitioner," but more importantly, let me quote the minister himself on what was intended and meant by the resolution preceding this bill, which, as I recall, was also on the order paper on June 14. On June 14 the minister, introducing the resolution preceding the bill to set up the health resources fund, said, as reported at the bottom of the first column of page 6377 of *Hansard*:

Mr. Chairman, I am pleased to begin the discussion on this resolution setting up a health resources fund. As hon. members are aware, the government proposes to introduce shortly legislation under which it will be possible to give financial support to the provinces for the provision of medical care benefits.

That legislation is the bill now before the committee, and it is what the minister was referring to in that portion of his remarks. The minister continued:

Such a program—

That is the program envisaged in this current legislation and in the resolution preceding the legislation.

—will undoubtedly help to create a professional climate which will attract increasing numbers of able people to the study and practice of medicine and related professions and will thereby improve still further the quality of care available to our people.

May I emphasize the words, "and related professions". I also emphasize those words by which the minister gave his interpretation of what was intended by this bill and what was implicit in the resolution upon which it is based:

● (7:50 p.m.)

Such a program will undoubtedly help to create a professional climate which will attract increasing numbers of able people to the study and practice of medicine and related professions—

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear.

Mr. Fulton: That was the minister's intention.

Mr. Winkler: That is what he meant too.

Mr. Fulton: That is what is included in this bill based on that resolution.

Mr. MacEachen: You are not serious, are you?

Mr. Fulton: Was the minister not serious on June 14? Was he attempting to mislead the house?

Mr. MacEachen: I was perfectly serious, but I am wondering whether the hon. gentleman is serious in drawing the conclusion he is drawing from that sentence when he concludes that the resolution which preceded this bill is somehow governed by a sentence drawn from a speech made last June. You are not serious in that?

Mr. Winkler: Have you changed your mind since then?

Mr. Fulton: I am suggesting that the minister was serious last June when he was interpreting the effect of the resolution then before the house. That is what I am suggesting. On June 14 he said that the intention of the current proposal was that such a program would help to create a professional climate which would attract increasing numbers of able people to the study and practice of medicine and related professions. Today he says that was never his intention at all. He says he never intended that by the resolution. He cannot maintain both positions. I suggest that he should revert to the much more practical, meaningful and sincere position which he outlined on June 14 when he gave his interpretation of the intention of the resolution and the legislation we are now discussing.

There are one or two other reasons why I submit this amendment is perfectly in order. One is the matter referred to already by the hon. member for Red Deer and the hon. member for Fraser Valley. The income tax guide gives the government's interpretation of medical expenses and we find it includes payments to hospitals, doctors, dentists—I am leaving out some of the words here—chiropractors, Christian Science practitioners, naturopaths, optometrists, osteopaths, podiatrists and therapists. This establishes clearly by definition, not a dictionary definition but a legislative definition, that the words "medical practitioner" embrace far more persons than those who are qualified to practice by the regulations of the Colleges of Physicians and Surgeons. So, on all these various grounds, as well as on the ground of what I might call a homely and simple illustration, the point made by the minister simply is not tenable.

Let me put it to you in this way, sir. Suppose I said that I propose to introduce a measure which will provide for the living expenses of the minister, but I did not define living expenses and the resolution did not