

*Medicare*

a later stage. Both are respected members of the medical profession and they are taking the lead at this time in order to make sure that the scope of services which will be made available through this legislation to the Canadian people includes the services of those professions which are in this bill excluded under the term "medical services".

This step they have taken has particular reference to provincial health schemes presently in existence which recognize the services of health practitioners other than just those of the medical profession.

I am very disappointed in the remarks the minister has just made. He has shown that it is not his intention to allow the amendment to go through because he has raised a point of order based on nothing more than a technicality. We are dealing with the bill before us, and it seems to me that it is the right of members of this house to make amendments to the bill as they see fit.

To try to argue that this amendment, which has just been moved by the hon. member for Hamilton South, is out of order is to do nothing more nor less than to underline the narrow and limited confines the minister intends the bill to have. According to the statement he has previously made on numerous occasions, the bill is to assure adequate health care for the people of Canada.

Likewise, Mr. Chairman, the members of the committee are entitled to amend this legislation so as to define, in the case of paragraph (d) of clause 2, just what is meant by the term "medical practitioners". If that term can be defined by this amendment—and that is what it seeks to do—so as to include those who are engaged in related health professions, then it ought to be the right of members of this committee to make such amendment.

If we are going to amend paragraph (d), then in view of the proposed amendment which the hon. member for Simcoe East is going to move, it will likewise be necessary to amend paragraph (f).

I believe that by saying that the resolution limits the scope of this bill to services rendered by those the minister interprets as medical practitioners, the minister is in fact weakening the bill. He is not providing the services rendered by those in related health professions. I believe the professions to which the amendment has reference are recognized under provincial law as such, and are also included in provincial health plans which are now in existence.

23033—662

I do not agree at all with the argument just raised by the minister and I give my support to the amendment that has been moved. I will also support the amendment which the hon. member for Simcoe East has indicated he will be moving when we reach paragraph (f).

• (5:30 p.m.)

**Mr. Smith:** The kindest thing which could be said about the statement the minister has just made is that his argument is specious. That is placing a charitable interpretation on it.

Surely, the purpose of this bill is to provide medical care for the people of Canada. To say that medical care cannot be provided by optometrists, by chiropractors or by dentists is pure nonsense. There is a further objectionable feature inasmuch as the minister is telling the provinces, under whose jurisdiction licensing has been placed, that they can only licence certain people.

A great deal has been said about a shortage of doctors. Surely, one of the best ways of alleviating a shortage of doctors is by making use of people who have a great fund of specialized knowledge. I think the minister is talking poppycock when he says this amendment is out of order.

**Mr. Fulton:** I believe the hon. member for Simcoe North has demolished the argument of the Minister of National Health and Welfare. It is true the resolution said "to provide for the needs of a medical care service" but this does not mean that parliament cannot define what shall be included in the term "medical care service". That is what is sought in the amendment which is before the committee.

**Mr. MacEachen:** Would the hon. member suggest for one moment that by any stretch of the imagination it would include optometry, for example, as a medical care service?

**An hon. Member:** Yes.

**Mr. MacEachen:** You ought to read the provincial acts which make it abundantly clear that it is not.

**Mr. Fulton:** The minister asked me a question and I should like to reply. My answer is, yes, most certainly. This bill is supposed to be based on provincial medical insurance care plans. If the provincial plans define the term "medical services" to include paramedical services—and if we decide that our enactment should adopt that definition—is the minister to say the amendment goes beyond the resolution? Of course if does not, if we care to define these things as medical services.