

Medicare

general debate on the main operative clause in the bill, and a final general debate on clause 1. I am not pressing the point of whether you are making a correct interpretation of what the hon. member for Simcoe East is about to say. Maybe he has an amendment to move to paragraph (a), but I do say we should think pretty seriously about our procedure in this respect, lest we defeat the purpose of the reform we made.

Mr. Fulton: Mr. Chairman, may I simply point out when you have a clause that deals with matters as wide and as varying as the definition of the word "contribution", which means "a contribution by Canada pursuant to section 3," and the definition of "insurable resident," as well as the definition of "population" and of "medical practitioner," then obviously it involves us in a discussion of the whole bill because it is not possible to consider and deal with any one of those definitions without reference to other clauses of the bill.

For instance paragraph (a) reads:

"contribution" means a contribution by Canada pursuant to section 3;

Obviously, we are going to have to be allowed to refer to clause 3 in order to get the exact meaning. Further, paragraph (e) reads:

"medical care insurance plan" means a plan established pursuant to an act of the legislature of a province that satisfies the criteria set forth in subsection (1) of section 4;

So, we we will have to refer to clause 4, and so it goes throughout all the paragraphs of clause 2.

I submit it would be narrowing discussion almost to the point of impossibility to say that there cannot be a general reference to the subject matter of the bill during the course of discussion of this clause.

I am reasonably sure, Mr. Chairman, that you will find the ambit of the debate to take place here will not be anything like as wide as that on second reading. I suggest we are going to get ourselves into an awful lot of trouble if we say that every word spoken should be strictly relevant to each of the paragraphs in the clause.

Mr. Baldwin: Mr. Chairman, may I support what the hon. membr for Kamloops has said and point out to you that you have available a weapon to meet the problem to which the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre refers. I refer to the rule, which the Chair can enforce, against repetition. Hon. members on this side of the chamber of course, always meticulously

and strictly adhere to that rule against repetition, so naturally it will not be against us that this rule will need to be invoked. I am thinking of other hon. members who might be the main offenders.

With regard to general discussion on clause 1, I assume from what the minister has said that there may be certain amendments moved by the government side. It may well be that by the time we get to clause 1, as a result of amendments offered from this side of the house which the government might see fit to accept and the amendments which the government itself intends to offer, it will be a completely new bill. The general discussion under clause 1 will be the natural and proper place to undertake an examination of the bill as amended. But I do believe that under clause 2, a definition clause, while we cannot have the same type of general discussion that we can have under clause 1, nevertheless the committee is entitled to make a very thorough and detailed study of any aspect which comes within the ambit of definition.

Mr. Patterson: Mr. Chairman, there are just two questions I should like to raise in connection with this point. If general debate is allowed on clause 2, is it going to transgress not only the spirit but also the letter of the rule that has been in operation for some time? Second, if a general debate is allowed on this particular paragraph of clause 2, are we going to be allowed another general debate when we return to clause 1? I think we should have more information about these two questions.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Chairman, I have no objection to the comment made by the hon. member for Peace River, that if in order to have detailed and thorough discussion of these paragraphs reference may be made, if necessary, to other clauses. With that I agree, but I also agree with what the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre has said, that we cannot have a general debate on clause 2. We have stood clause 1. We are now on clause 2, and I think we will have to proceed on an experimental basis to see whether we are going to have the kind of debate to which the hon. member for Peace River referred, which we on this side accept, or a general debate, which we will not accept.

The Deputy Chairman: May I point out to members of the committee that the Chair interrupted when the hon. member for Simcoe East was speaking because the hon. member was referring to the topic of medical manpower