

to participate in the health field and provide supplementary insurance to the basic insurance provided under the plan, then all of this can now be done under clause 4 (1)(a). There is no need in the bill for this additional subclause, which seems to suggest that the door should be opened to authorities other than the public authorities which were defined earlier.

[Translation]

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Chairman, I would like to say only one thing after the remarks we have just heard from the hon. member for York South (Mr. Lewis) who said that I was taking the side of the big interests in Canada.

I would like to point out to him that Alberta has a medical plan and that 83 per cent of the people of Alberta are insured and benefit therefrom at the present time. When the hon. member says that the administration costs of that plan in Saskatchewan amount to 6 per cent out of every dollar, he should add that Saskatchewan is enjoying at the present time the strongest taxation system of all the Canadian provinces, precisely because money collected in other fields is allocated to the medical care plan. The Saskatchewan plan is clearly inferior to that which the people of Alberta enjoy today, and the hon. member for York South is perfectly aware of that. Of course he is.

Mr. Lewis: No, no, the facts are not like that at all.

Mr. Caouette: If the hon. member is not aware of it, he should go to Alberta and see what is going on there. In Alberta, there are joint programs; private enterprise, in co-operation with the government, has set up a medical care plan which is clearly superior to any other now in force in Canada.

Mr. Lewis: That is not a plan, it is a nightmare.

[English]

Amendment (Mr. Knowles) negatived: Yeas, 7; nays, 48.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Richard): I declare the amendment lost. Shall subclause 2 carry?

Subclause agreed to.

Some hon. Members: Carried.

The Acting Chairman (Mr. Richard): Shall clause 4 carry?

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Chairman, I intend to move an amendment to clause 4 which deals

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with one aspect of the problem facing the committee. We have had a series of amendments to extend the coverage of this bill to a variety of additional professions, including the profession of optometry. It is a fact that under the terms of the present bill eye examinations, for example, which are performed by a medical practitioner or an ophthalmologist are an insured service, while eye examinations provided by optometrists are not an insured service. There is a difference of treatment both with respect to the practitioners and the patients of each.

One proposal that has been put forward is to include immediately all services of optometrists under the bill. That situation, of course, could not occur because as a government we are not prepared to recommend to the house at the present time that additional services be included, and other efforts to do so have been abortive because the terms of the amendments went beyond the scope of the resolution. I am going to propose an amendment that will make it possible at the option of the provinces to exclude, if they wish, eye examinations from those services.

Mr. Knowles: Shame.

Mr. MacEachen: Hon. gentlemen earlier expressed their disapproval of this approach, but I want to put it forward because I think it is a useful step to take, one which would be appropriate during the period of time that the whole of the profession is not included within the scope of the bill.

I have under consideration a way in which it might be possible to meet some of the points made with regard to the inclusion of additional health professions later, with the federal and provincial governments acting together on the question. In the meantime I propose to move this amendment in order to meet this particular problem. Perhaps it will be useful for me to have a decision of the committee on it today so that it may assist me in my deliberations over the week end with respect to the other problem.

Mr. Rynard: Mr. Chairman, does the minister propose to move the amendment now?

[Translation]

Mr. Cadioux (Terrebonne): Mr. Chairman, I move the following amendment:

That Bill No. C-227 be also amended by adding the following paragraph to clause 4:

"Uninsured services

(3) In the application of this act to a plan set up under an act of the provincial legislature, an eye

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