

Medicare

scope of this bill. I am sure no one will understand better than he does that their exclusion would bring about great hardship in his own area as well as in Nova Scotia in general and, would think, throughout the country. These men are doing good work. I am really surprised that the hon. member for Antigonish-Guysborough has not risen to espouse this move to have them included in the bill. I am sure optometrists must perform as good a service in Antigonish county, as they in other parts of the country.

The hon. member for Red Deer and the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre had something to say about the tabling of documents and representations. I have great respect for the medical profession, but I wonder whether in this connection the minister would consider tabling any correspondence he has received from the Canadian Medical Association; I am interested in finding out whether the association has made any statements opposing the inclusion of optometrists within the terms of the bill. Perhaps the minister would advise the committee whether he has received representations directly or indirectly from members of the Canadian Medical Association opposing the inclusion of optometrists. This might throw light on the situation. I may be wrong and, if so, I stand to be corrected, but I have the impression, and I have been informed, that opposition to the inclusion of optometrists has come from the medical profession. As I say, I hope I am wrong. I hope my information is erroneous.

Next, I should like to impress upon the minister the importance of including chiropractors in the bill. The hon. gentleman will know from personal experience that many coalminers undergo manipulative treatment at the hands of chiropractors. I have been treated myself by these doctors, and there are many like me in this respect. The minister must know this, because he has come into contact with coalminers in his own area on many occasions. I am sure he realizes the importance of this profession to men who have been broken up in the coal mines and who experience relief as a result of these services of chiropractors.

May I read into the record at this point a telegram which has been received by my hon. friend from Simcoe East from D. C. Sutherland, Executive Secretary, Canadian Chiropractic Association? It reads:

Proposal to remove eye refractions from Bill C-227 would open way to serious abuse and is no solution to problem. Representative of physical medicine asked Ontario Royal Commission on

[Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria).]

Workmen's Compensation Act on October eleventh 1966 to recognize chiropractic vertebral manipulation when performed by a physician.

This is direct overlapping. Grave injustice to include one profession but not the other in bill C-227. If eye refractions removed then vertebral or spinal manipulation by physicians must be removed, however this discriminates against patients requiring these services. Paramedical services already being included in provincial plans and should be included at federal level.

As I said, this telegram is signed by D. C. Sutherland, Executive Secretary, Canadian Chiropractic Association. Having regard to this telegram and to the many other representations which I presume the minister has received, I hope that not only optometrists but chiropractors will be included in the provisions of this legislation.

In closing, I can only re-emphasize the importance of optometry, particularly in the maritimes.

• (4:10 p.m.)

I am sure the minister is so fully aware of this that he will reconsider and try to make some changes. I hope he will definitely state whether representations have been made by the Canadian Medical Association, directly or in some other manner, that optometrists should not be included. As I said before, I hope I am in error but I would like to have that clarified.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Chairman, there have been representations from the profession itself urging the inclusion of optometry. I do not remember getting any representations from the medical profession, either in writing or by word of mouth, asking that members of the optometric profession be not included in the bill.

We have taken the position that we should begin with medical practitioners. I appreciate the comments that have been made by hon. members with respect to the contribution made in the health field by optometry and, undoubtedly, as these plans mature in Canada additional professions will be added as insured services. The fact that optometry and a number of other professions are not included is not to be regarded as any indication that their services are not valuable.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Chairman, we appreciate the view expressed by the minister now, and expressed by him when the resolution was before the house, to the effect that other professional groups and other services would eventually be included in the general term medical care. May I ask him why it would not be advantageous from his point of view, as