

Medicare

larger provincial medical health underwriters include podiatry services in their extended health plans. Federal government employees plan includes podiatry services.

4. A preponderance of patients requiring foot care fall in the old age pension group. It is to be hoped that any widening of coverage in the medicare program will seriously consider the foot health of this group.

Sincerely,
N. Mathews, B.Sc., DSC,
President, B.C. Podiatry Assn.

[Translation]

Mr. Chairman, this comes from British Columbia and, besides, the Minister of National Health and Welfare is quite aware of this. As far as the province of Quebec is concerned, I read in the newspaper *Le Devoir*, in the March 24, 1965 edition—almost two years ago—the following:

Quebec will have its own health insurance plan within two years.

Now, this means that on March 24, 1967, Quebec will have its own health insurance plan. A statement to this effect was made by the former premier of the province of Quebec, Mr. Jean Lesage, who said:

The experience I had in Ottawa, in 1950, when I presided the Senate and the House of Commons joint committee on old age pensions has convinced me of the excellent work that can be performed through a body made up of representatives of both houses.

I have already submitted certain names to the cabinet, said Mr. Lesage. Normally, he added, such a committee should include experts representing the government, insurance companies, medical practitioners, and so on, an economist and an actuary.

Mr. Chairman, it was after this statement made by the former premier of the province of Quebec on March 24, 1965, that the then federal minister of national health and welfare said:

Under the Canada Assistance Plan that we are ready to put up one dollar for every dollar now spent by the provinces on mothers allowances, an assistance to mothers with dependent children.

We are ready to share the costs of health services provided by the provinces to public assistance recipients.

● (3:40 p.m.)

The former minister of national health and welfare, the present Secretary of State who was minister of national health said:

We shall arrange to include the costs of medical, nursing, dental, optical and pharmaceutical care.

She said that on April 20, 1965, a month after the statement made by the Quebec premier, Mr. Jean Lesage. A month later, Ottawa said: We will follow step, we will give dollar for dollar to the provinces which

[Mr. Caouette.]

will take steps to include medical, nursing, dental, optical and pharmaceutical care. And today, Mr. Chairman, two or three amendments have been refused so far because, according to the minister, they would entail additional expenditures.

Why is the present Minister of National Health and Welfare introducing in the house a bill which does not agree with what his predecessor told us on April 20, 1965, when it was stated that everything would be included, medical, nursing, dental, optical and pharmaceutical care. Today, an attempt is made to limit Bill No. C-227 with regard to medical care and paramedical care, which are related to medicine just the same. As far as I know, a chiropractor, for instance, does not prevent a physician from practising his profession, medicine, but I know that, quite often, a physician needs a chiropractor to help him heal someone. The same thing happens in the dental field. Why is not a dentist officially recognized under Bill No. C-227? Or an optometrist? The minister knows very well that the ophthalmologist will put in a claim for an eye examination, giving another reason to be paid by the state or from public funds, whereas the optometrist will not be able to do so.

Mr. Chairman, I am not a physician, I will not be in charge of the medical care program proposed by the government. However, I want to put the government and the department face to face with their own contradictions. I did not state in April that all services would be included and that the federal government was ready to spend dollar for dollar, with any province, for a full medical care program. And today Bill No. C-227 says exactly the opposite: optometrists, podiatrists and chiropractors are excluded. All kinds of professions are excluded.

Mr. Simard: Before the 1965 elections.

Mr. Caouette: Before the 1965 elections, naturally. Before elections, the government is always willing to do everything; but after the elections, the bill is limited, slashed; in plain language, it is shrivelled down to the dimensions allowed by the financial means available to the Minister of National Health and Welfare (Mr. MacEachen):

Moreover, I am convinced that the minister agrees with me; if he had the money, he would be the first to accept the amendments, the first to recognize that podiatrists, chiropractors, optometrists should be put on the same footing as medical practitioners. What