

Medicare

Some hon. Members: No, let us continue.

An hon. Member: Let the Chairman finish his ruling.

Mr. Winkler: Mr. Chairman, consistent with the argument developed a few minutes ago, and I must admit that I did not hear the entire debate, I think the minister should indicate whether he is prepared during the course of our consideration to make some amendments beyond those dealings with the individuals who are to be covered. Perhaps he will indicate that there is some feeling to ameliorate the present terms of the bill, and make some amendments of his own to broaden its application.

I understand that currently there are ten paramedical personnel required for every practising physician. If that is the case, certainly with the introduction of this type of legislation, we must expect a tremendous expansion, in the demand for medical services. We have already experienced this type of expansion in regard to hospital insurance. That was also the end result so far as doctors were concerned.

I think this has changed the entire practice of a physician, particularly if he is outside the urban areas but perhaps also if he is inside the urban areas.

• (6:10 p.m.)

I have said previously that I believe services such as optometry, dental surgery and chiropractic services, as was well illustrated by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre, are required from a medical point of view. This being the case, I think we should hear from the minister—and it may determine to a great extent the time that will be taken on the balance of the items in the bill—whether he is prepared to bring forward amendments to broaden the services to be provided. I believe this is an important point. It is important so far as the patient is concerned; it is extremely important so far as the practitioners are concerned. An explanation by the minister in this respect will perhaps determine the amount of persuasion that we think it is necessary to bring to bear upon him and the government to accept some of the amendments we propose. I should like to hear from the minister in this regard.

Mr. Pascoe: Mr. Chairman, I will take but a moment to discuss this amendment. I should like to draw the attention of the committee to the brief which the Canadian Podiatry Association presented to the minister.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Chairman, may I rise on a point of order and suggest that the question before the committee is the regularity of the amendment moved by the hon. member for Hamilton South. It is quite impossible for me to reply to the question raised by the hon. member for Grey-Bruce until we know one way or the other whether the amendment is properly before the committee. Could we have a ruling on the amendment, Mr. Chairman, if there is no evidence of further procedural argument?

Mr. Pascoe: On a point of order, Mr. Chairman, I would point out that you have heard other hon. members speak to this amendment, and I do not see why I should be cut off now. I suggest that I should be able to say a few words on this matter. I would draw the minister's attention to the brief presented to him by the Canadian Podiatry Association.

This point has been mentioned many times during our discussion, in regard to other services. Podiatry is that specialized field of medical practice which is concerned with the prevention, diagnosis, medical, surgical, mechanical, physical and adjunctive treatment of, and the prescribing for, all diseases, defects and disabilities of the human foot. I should also like to point out that the provinces of British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario have legislation governing the practice of podiatry. The province of Quebec is in the process of obtaining a podiatry act.

I point out that the standard required for those wishing to practice the profession of podiatry is very high. Aspirants for a career in podiatry must meet high standards of preliminary education, take at least two years of university training in arts and sciences, similar to a pre-medical course, and successfully complete four years of the podiatry course prior to the awarding of a degree. I will not say anything further at this time. I just wanted to put on record my opinion that if this amendment is allowed, consideration should be given to providing podiatric services in the bill.

The Chairman: Order. Perhaps now there has been sufficient said on the amendment, and on the point of order raised by the minister, for me to make a ruling on whether this amendment is in order. Most of the debate on the amendment and on the point of order raised by the minister has centred around the definition of "medical care" and what "medical care" should include. I must say