

Health and Welfare

as those who would be eligible for services on the basis of a means test is a fundamental move which this house could not take without a great deal of prior consultation with the provinces, and with the professions involved.

The other method on which services have been provided is the so-called indemnity benefit. Instead of the service approach, you take the approach of providing benefits through an indemnity type of insurance plan. I do not think, generally speaking, the benefits under the indemnity type cover complete medical, surgical, dental and ophthalmological care because the private insurance companies, in developing this indemnity approach, generally insist upon certain types of financial deterrents, such as the co-insurance clause, before comprehensive insurance of this nature is underwritten. Again, there was nothing in the resolution or in the introductory statement by the mover of the resolution which suggested that he had this type of provision in mind, the indemnity type of approach, which is the approach generally favoured by the private insurance industry, and many of other carriers.

Regardless of which approach is taken, the service approach or the indemnity approach, there must be a careful determination of the categories eligible. There must be a careful spelling out of the limitations of the financial commitment with respect to the services used. With many of the service plans a *pro rata* device or a pool fund seems almost inescapable, if the service approach is to be adopted. If, on the other hand, the indemnity approach is to be adopted, then certainly the experience with those plans which have experimented with this type of indemnity plan would not indicate that the type of coverage provided would meet the general requirements of this resolution, that is free medical, surgical, dental and ophthalmological care. Certain deterrent charges requiring the patient to pay a portion of the charge has been found, in many cases, to be necessary as part of the administration of these plans in order to keep financial responsibility within limits.

In summarizing what I have argued, may I say that the mover of this resolution has not defined "federal government pensioners". As I have pointed out, a very large proportion of our population receive cash benefits from the public treasury, and they could fall within the popular acceptance of the term "pensioners", as used in this resolution. If, however, it is the intention to restrict it to employees of the government of Canada who are retired, or to those beneficiaries of the categorical assistance programs administered by the provinces with federal government

reimbursement, then that is another matter. This has not been made clear. If the hon. member's introductory remarks suggested that categorical assistance recipients should be eligible for this care, then there would at least have to be a great deal of discussion with the provinces in a federal-provincial conference before any move of this nature would be justified by the federal government. I feel that there is a grave constitutional question as to the way in which the resolution would be interpreted in its present wording. I am not saying it could not be done, but I am saying if that is the intention of the mover of the resolution, then his resolution should have been worded accordingly.

I pointed out, sir, the way in which benefits were provided on the service basis or on the indemnity basis. The service basis has been adopted by D.V.A., and that has a very obvious limitation within the framework of the program itself. I feel, Mr. Speaker, that a commitment of this magnitude for the benefit of certain categories of the population only, is not a proper approach. I would prefer to approach assistance of that type in the hospital insurance field, for example, where we have the general categories of the population benefiting. If it is the intention of the mover of the resolution to adopt the indemnity approach to his provisional plan, then this has not been stated and is by no means clear. The indemnity approach, as exemplified by the private insurance companies, contains many deterrent clauses and co-insurance clauses, while the wording in the resolution refers to free medical, surgical, dental and ophthalmological care.

For all of these reasons, I feel that the mover should withdraw this resolution and introduce one more precisely worded to state his intention, indicating clearly what group of the population he intends to have covered. I think such a resolution should also define much more carefully the method of providing benefits. I do not feel, Mr. Speaker, that in the manner specified in the resolution it is possible to cover the greatest range, because of the limitation on the concept of providing service, and at least the resolution should spell out quite carefully the intentions of its mover.

Mr. William Dean Howe (Hamilton South): Mr. Speaker, I should like to say a few words on this motion. I take exception, first, to the use of the words "federal government pensioners" because this term is not defined. One should define what a federal government pensioner is. If we assume that all those now in receipt of a pension from the