

Medicare

insured medical care services, and medical care services certainly go far beyond merely the services which are provided by a medical practitioner.

Mr. MacEachen: If my hon. friend's argument is sound, why is the amendment of the hon. member for Hamilton South necessary?

Mr. Douglas: The answer to that question is very simple. By the interpretation which the minister has put on the bill, he has restricted and narrowed the interpretation of medical care services far beyond anything which appeared in the resolution. The minister is not arguing that what was in the bill at second reading is the guiding principle. What he is arguing is that this amendment goes beyond the resolution. There is nothing in the resolution which says that this program is to be limited to the services performed by a medical practitioner.

Mr. Starr: He is creating a lot of confusion.

Mr. Douglas: As a matter of fact the minister, when introducing the resolution, wanted to be very generous and said to the people of Canada that we are providing medical care service. Most people took that to mean medical and paramedical services.

When the bill came down, of course, the minister restricted this solely to services provided by a medical practitioner. This rules out physiotherapy, deep X-ray therapy, optometric services and services provided by osteopaths, chiropractors and psychologists. I presume it will also rule out the services provided by dental surgeons, and that is a very important service indeed.

I hope for the sake of the plan the minister is introducing he will not take this narrow or restrictive view. The minister is making history by this legislation, and he is establishing a great milestone in the history of welfare legislation in Canada. Let me assure him that this plan will be a disappointment to the people of Canada if he makes it so narrow and restrictive that it does not provide the kind of plan the Canadian people are expecting. Canadian people have looked at British health services and the plans in West Germany and other parts of the world and are expecting a genuine medical services plan. When they find this plan is going to be restricted only to the services provided by a medical care practitioner they will be extremely disappointed.

I hope the minister, for these reasons, will give some further thought to the very narrow interpretation he is now placing on the plan before the house.

[Mr. Douglas.]

Mr. Starr: Mr. Chairman, in view of the fact it is now past six o'clock I wonder whether we could agree to a recess for dinner until seven thirty.

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Chairman, I am agreeable to adjourning until seven if we could—

Mr. Starr: It is now ten minutes after six.

Mr. Knowles: Let us adjourn until eight so the minister can go see the governor general and get his approval of the amendments we shall be moving.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Chairman, I am glad to note the hon. member's tacit recognition of the soundness of my procedural argument.

Mr. Starr: In view of the fact it is now after six o'clock I suggest we recess until seven thirty, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. MacEachen: I am agreeable to recessing until seven thirty, but could we have a ruling on this point at this time so we will know what we are doing when we return?

The Chairman: If there is some discussion as to the time of the adjournment, perhaps I should rise and report progress. Is it the wish of the committee that I make my ruling on this amendment now?

Some hon. Members: Agreed.

The Chairman: Most of the debate on this particular amendment has centred around the definition of medical services. In my view, this is not the problem that faces the Chair.

Mr. Winkler: Mr. Chairman, I have a few remarks I should like to make and I suggest that you withhold your ruling until we return.

The Chairman: Shall I rise and report progress?

Mr. MacEachen: I think it was intended that we sit during this hour, but we have agreed to rise until seven thirty on the understanding that we have a ruling. We have had a long procedural debate, and if we cannot have a ruling now I think we should continue to sit.

Mr. Starr: In order that we have an atmosphere of serenity in the House of Commons without anyone being riled up, I suggest the minister should not throw left curves at this time. All I am asking is that we agree to recess for dinner until seven thirty with no strings attached.