

Medicare

No. C-227, to authorize the payment of contributions by Canada toward the cost of insured medical care services incurred by provinces pursuant to provincial medical care insurance plans—Mr. MacEachen—Mr. Rinfret in the chair.

On clause 3—*Contribution payable*.

The Deputy Chairman: When the committee rose last evening, clause 3 of the bill was under consideration and the hon. member for Lapointe proposed an amendment to it. I will now read the text of the amendment submitted by the hon. member for Lapointe. It reads as follows:

—that, after the words “by Canada”, in the first line of clause 3, the following words be added:

“or a fiscal compensation is made by Canada at the discretion of each province.”

May I suggest to hon. members that before a decision is rendered expressions of opinion be voiced regarding the validity of the amendment.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Chairman, I wish to make a very brief submission with respect to the acceptability of the amendment. My submission is, of course, that the amendment is not in order, first of all and principally because an amendment on precisely the same terms was moved to incorporate the principle of fiscal equivalence and was defeated by the house. The amendment we are now considering is the same. Aside from this point, I doubt whether this particular clause is one to which any amendment can be moved if the other obstacle were not in the way.

Mr. Diefenbaker: Mr. Chairman, apparently the hon. member for Lapointe is not present, it being Friday. Would it not be appropriate and proper that this particular clause be held over to give him an opportunity of being present? I would think that this would be the essence of courtesy, particularly to one who has been such a faithful ally of the government.

The Deputy Chairman: Is it agreed that this clause be stood?

Some hon. Members: No, no.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Chairman, I do not wish to take part at any length in this procedural debate, but there is one point which I should like to make.

I might say at the outset that I have very grave doubts about the validity of this amendment, but I do not think the Chair should rule

it out of order on the ground that the same matter was the subject of an amendment to the motion on second reading. Generally, our rules provide opportunities at various stages to take votes on the same question. This is my only concern. Mr. Chairman, you are free to rule the amendment out of order but do not rule it out of order on that ground.

[*Translation*]

The Deputy Chairman: Order. Last night, when clause 3 of this bill was being discussed by the committee, the hon. member for Lapointe (Mr. Grégoire) asked leave to move an amendment.

Clause 3 reads as follows:

A contribution is payable by Canada to each province in accordance with this act, calculated for each year in respect of the cost of insured services incurred by the province in the year pursuant to a medical care insurance plan of the province.

The hon. member for Lapointe asked leave to move the following amendment:

—that, after the words “by Canada”, in the first line of clause 3, the following words be added:

“or a fiscal compensation is made by Canada at the discretion of each province”.

After consideration of this amendment, and having listened to the arguments presented by two hon. members, the Chair has come to the conclusion that, for several reasons, it cannot be accepted.

During consideration of this bill in committee of the whole, the Chair stated many times that an amendment must not infringe upon the the financial initiative of the crown.

Citation 246, paragraph 3 of the 4th edition of Beauchesne states the following:

An amendment infringes the financial initiative of the crown, not only if it increases the amount, but also if it extends the objects and purposes, or relaxes the conditions and qualifications expressed in the communication by which the crown has demanded or recommended a charge.

The resolution preceding this bill, agreed to by the house on July 12 last, reads as follows:

That it is expedient to introduce a measure to authorize the payment of contributions by Canada toward the cost of insured medical care services incurred by provinces pursuant to provincial medical care insurance plans.

The Chair considers that the amendment proposed would introduce an entirely new principle in the bill. Therefore, the amendment constitutes, because of its nature, a substantive motion and is not relevant to the bill nor to the preceding resolution.

The Chair draws the attention of the committee to a vote taken on that matter earlier in this session.