

● (9:40 p.m.)

Mr. Brewin: I know you have heard a great deal on this matter, Mr. Chairman, and I will be brief. But I wish to deal with the argument put forward by the minister. As I understand it, he says that the amendment cannot expand the terms of the resolution. This, of course, we must accept. But it is my submission that, equally, the minister cannot, by narrowing the scope of the resolution, restrict the normal meaning of the words used and thereby prevent any hon. member from moving any amendment within the ambit of the original resolution. In this regard I submit to you that this amendment does not extend the resolution in any way. It is totally different from the previous amendments. The two previous amendments proposed that in addition to the medical care services referred to in the original resolution services provided by other professions should be added, and in so doing it could be very strongly argued, and you have already held, sir, that this would be an expansion of the original terms. But the present amendment is of a totally different nature.

The present amendment accepts the broad general words of the resolution, which I presume were drafted by the government referring to the provision of medical care services. This is a phrase that is very broad, but I think it is reasonable to restrict it to the type of service provided by doctors. I think this is the interpretation that you, sir, gave previously. But to pick out of this broad phraseology the proposition that it is only service when provided by doctors is to put a restrictive meaning on the breadth of the language in the resolution, which language was chosen by the government. If the government wanted to restrict the resolution to medical care services provided by doctors, it would have been very easy to say no. Instead, it used this broader language, thus permitting a proper interpretation to be made that if some other group provides the very type of service which is traditionally and normally proffered by doctors, then in fact medical care services are being provided.

In addition, in the original resolution there was reference to provincial medical care insurance plans. One can look at the terms of the resolution to see what its scope was, and when that is done I think we become aware that provincial medical insurance plans was a broad enough phrase to include these types of services. I suggest with great respect to Your Honour that the argument made by the minister is not applicable to the circumstances of this case, and that the restriction

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he is asking you to impose is not consistent with the resolution but is consistent with the minister's own restrictive ideas of what the legislation should be.

We in the opposition have the right to take the terms of the original resolution and, so long as we stay within its scope, move an amendment that will be in order.

The Chairman: Order—

[*Translation*]

Mr. Caouette: Mr. Chairman, it seems to me I should have the right to express my opinion like any other hon. member in this house.

Mr. Chairman, the amendment reads as follows:

[*English*]

—and services rendered by optometrists which, when rendered by a medical practitioner—

[*Translation*]

Here, we should come to an understanding of some kind. We have ophthalmologists who examine the eyes, provide glasses to those who need them and who are recognized as doctors, as stipulated here in the amendment:

[*English*]

—when rendered by a medical practitioner, would be considered as insured services,

[*Translation*]

Mr. Chairman, optometrists or oculists complete practically the same studies as ophthalmologists. However, the latter would be included under this amendment, whereas the former would not. I feel that optometrists or oculists should be included in the bill on exactly the same basis as the others.

If a physician or an ophthalmologist states that the vision of a patient is affected due to a kidney disease, according to the bill, the government would provide for the required care in its legislation and one could set forth any reason or any motive so as to enable ophthalmologists to submit claims to the medical care plan or to any medical insurance plan established by any province at any time, anywhere and in any way.

Mr. Chairman, we suggest—and it may be advisable to change the amendment—that the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre include not only:

[*English*]

—services rendered by optometrists which, when rendered by a medical practitioner, would be considered as insured services,