

Medicare

hope that some publicity is given to what we say. Certainly what might be said would have no effect if we lose our right to amend legislation.

I urge you very respectfully to give serious and careful consideration to this situation. In spite of any precedent that may be involved, I urge Your Honour to reconsider the ruling that has been made that this and other amendments are out of order.

In concluding my remarks, I should like again to remind Your Honour that a number of provinces at this time have health insurance or medical care insurance programs in effect. Other provinces are considering legislation along these lines but are waiting to see what happens to Bill C-227. It has been very clearly stated in the resolution, and during the introduction to this bill itself, that this bill intends to authorize the payment of contributions by Canada toward the cost of provincially insured medical care services. I believe that every one of the plans which presently exist in the provinces includes more than just the services of a medical doctor. In this regard, I would also say that it is impossible to limit the meaning of those words to the narrow definition which the hon. minister has tried to present in his argument to this house. If we accept that limited and narrow definition we will be going completely against what is common practice in the field of surgery and in the field of every other health service provided to the sick people in this country. If what I say is true, it is very important that in clause 2 of this bill we make sure we widen the meaning or interpretation of the words "medical practitioner" as they apply to legislation of those provinces which are providing health insurance plans and medical services.

It is my belief that the provinces which are concerned are looking to us to assist them in applying this legislation to their own plans. I believe they are looking to us to be more specific than the minister has been in attempting to limit this legislation.

● (4:40 p.m.)

A great deal has been said by the minister and other members of the government about the scope of this legislation and the benefit it will be to the sick people of Canada. I fail to understand how the minister can stand before this house at the present time and make some of the statements he has made. The minister has said that the provisions of this bill will be contained within the very narrowest of limits, which indicates that he really does not have

[Mr. Thompson.]

concern for the broader needs of the sick people of this country.

I would urge, Mr. Speaker, that you consider the arguments put forward by members of the opposition. I believe that if some hon. members on the government side of the house were to speak on the amendment—and it is our privilege to do this—we would see that support in this respect comes not only from this side of the house. I believe that many of the hon. members on the government side agree with us. I ask that very careful consideration be given to the definition of "medical practitioner". This definition is vital to our responsibility of seeing that health care is provided in the widest possible sense according to the over-all needs of the sick people of this country, because this is what they believe we are providing under this legislation.

Mr. F. J. Bigg (Athabasca): Mr. Speaker, I shall speak to the very narrow subject of the amendment proposed by the hon. member for Simcoe East (Mr. Rynard). I suppose I have to argue principally whether the amendment is in order, and I presume that Your Honour will decide whether we have the right to move an amendment affecting a money bill.

If the amendment had been brought in under clause 1, I would say there was validity to the argument; but in passing clause 1 and the principle of the bill the house agreed to the provision of universal medicare. I claim that in respect of paragraph (f) of clause 2 we are really looking for clarification, not only for the house but the provinces, as the last speaker said. We in this house have the duty not only to put forth the will of parliament in the narrow federal sense, but to protect provincial rights; because we are the only people who can protect those rights when it comes to the making of federal law.

Because we have agreed to the principle of universal medicare, I contend that we are not trying to broaden the scope of the bill but rather to clarify just what its scope is. If we do not do this now, we will not have another opportunity. On many occasions since coming to the house I have heard it said: You will have plenty of opportunity, when we get to the clause by clause study of the legislation, to go into detail. We are told that this is the time to go into detail with regard to the administration of a bill. As we all know, the administration of a piece of legislation is far more important than voting on its principle. This is when we get down to the meat of the legislation.