

Medicare

cents. The government does not wish to recognize podiatrists but it does recognize doctors who have specialized in this field.

It is the same everywhere. A general practitioner cannot do everything. There is an asylum in my riding which has 2,000 patients. There is one doctor engaged in general practice who looks after the needs of this hospital and of the municipality which contains 5,000 people. This institution is now under provincial jurisdiction though for years it was under federal jurisdiction. All those people in that hospital are not there because they have appendicitis or sore feet. They went there because they were mentally sick. And there is no psychiatrist in that hospital. It would cost no more to send a psychiatrist to look after those people than it would to engage the services of a general practitioner. This man is all alone. He told me: "I do what I can". Every time someone has a baby in the municipality he has to attend on the case. If someone wants a tooth extracted in the hospital he has to take it out. He is a good man. But if he were not, the people there would still have no one else to turn to.

I have nothing against using the services of a doctor but when I have a sore tooth I like to call a dentist. Similarly, when I need glasses I like to go to an optometrist. At least I know he will give me a clean pair of lenses. I do not like the set-up which is now proposed, with the general practitioners having their say above everyone else. I have referred to the services of dentists. Why not accept dentists under the scheme? In every Canadian university there is a recognized course in dentistry with the same high standards as apply to the medical profession. Why this discrimination against dentists, chiropractors and optometrists?

The government should not be unduly bound by the recommendations of a royal commission. The public want a feeling of security. Let the hon. gentleman bring in provisions acceptable to parliament and to the Canadian people. He will be praised across the board and people will say, for once, we have a decent minister of health. It would not cost a cent more.

Mr. Patterson: It would appear from the speeches we have heard that the remarks I wish to make will be in order at the present time. I have been tempted to raise a point of order in an effort to find out where we are in the present debate. I can only assume we are debating the amendment which is before the

committee and that we can make our observations with respect to this matter at the present time.

Mr. MacEachen: I hesitate to interrupt the hon. member. I can understand his difficulty with respect to this discussion, and this may be an appropriate time at which to ask for a ruling from the Chair which would clarify the point. This will not prevent the substance of this question being discussed under the clause. Perhaps, Mr. Chairman, we could have a ruling.

Mr. Patterson: I have been trying to get a ruling on the matter. I understand that so far the committee has been engaged on a general debate on the amendment introduced by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. Since the other speakers who have taken part in this discussion were permitted to cover the whole area thoroughly, I do not think we should try to pull in the lines now and say that the discussion is out of order.

Mr. Brewin: If Your Honour rules that we are engaged in a general debate I will gladly yield to the hon. member for Fraser Valley but if we are discussing the point of order I should like to make a few observations directed solely to the point of order.

The Chairman: An amendment was moved. It was considered by the Minister of National Health and Welfare and he raised a point of order as to its validity. It is the point of order raised by the minister that the committee is now discussing.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

An hon. Member: You mean: "should be discussing."

Mr. Patterson: With all due respect, it seems to me that the discussion has been ranging so far afield that it would be unfair to restrict it now on a technical point.

Mr. Langlois: To enable the Chair to get out of this dilemma I suggest that we might adjourn the debate for 15 minutes during which time the minister could telephone the Governor General to ask him to widen the scope of the bill.

The Chairman: I am prepared to rule now on the amendment moved by the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre. If the hon. member for Greenwood wishes to make any comment I will at least listen to him.

[Mr. Langlois (Mégantic).]