

Medicare

common problem should surely be covered by medicare. Would the minister be good enough to explain his position clearly in this matter?

The Chairman: Does this conclude discussion of subclause (f)?

Mr. McCleave: Mr. Chairman, I should like to make a comment regarding subclause (f). I have been advised by the president of the Nova Scotia Dentists Society that the recommendations of the Hall royal commission provide a solution which we have all been seeking.

The problem we have been facing is how to provide these other services under a proper definition. Unfortunately, I have only been able to glance rapidly through the volume which was sent to me and I cannot find the specific recommendation. The minister will undoubtedly be able to find it since I am sure he has seen the Hall royal commission report. I understand that the applicable recommendation is recommendation 213.

The Chairman: Is subclause (f) agreed to?

An hon. Member: On division.

Mr. Brand: Is it possible to have a vote on this subclause?

The Chairman: I can say to the hon. member for Saskatoon that we have before the committee one clause.

● (3:40 p.m.)

While for convenience the committee has agreed to go through the clause paragraph by paragraph, I think it might be better to vote on the clause as a whole rather than on each paragraph. This is why the Chair has asked whether this completes discussion on the paragraph, rather than carrying the paragraph.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Chairman, I am not going to detain the committee for long.

The Chairman: Order; is the hon. member speaking on subclause (f) or on subclause (g)?

Mr. Douglas: On subclause (f); I should like to make one comment before the clause passes. I hope the minister will not carry out the proposal he made the other evening when he said that in order to remove what appears to be discrimination between optometrists and ophthalmologists he would ask the provinces to refrain from providing eye refraction services under their programs when provided by ophthalmologists. I have already expressed

[Mr. Webb.]

my opinion, as have the members of this party, that eye refraction services should be available to insured persons both from optometrists and ophthalmologists. If the minister is not prepared to take this step in respect of services provided by optometrists, I hope he will not use any pressure on the provincial governments to persuade them to discontinue including these services when provided by ophthalmologists.

Eye correction is a very important service, particularly for children. It seems to me that if this service is taken out it will very considerably weaken the purpose of this bill, which is to provide insured medical care services.

I am sure that many provinces will resist such a proposal. I think the minister will run into a good deal of unnecessary opposition. Naturally, I regret that he has not accepted the amendment which I proposed, which would have allowed the Governor in Council to include paramedical services. However, as I say, I hope the minister will not restrict the services now envisaged in this measure and that eye refractions will be a service which insured persons can receive from ophthalmologists. Such a step would be a retrograde one, and I hope the minister keeps this point in mind.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Chairman, in this connection I wonder whether the minister would consider tabling, when Mr. Speaker is in the chair either today or tomorrow, the correspondence that he has had on this matter. The other evening he said he had received communications from some optometrists supporting the change at which he hinted. I wonder whether he would also table letters or communications he has received with respect to that position from the optometric association, giving us that association's official position on his proposed change.

Mr. Thompson: Mr. Chairman, following up the comments which have just been made by the previous two speakers may I say there are many overlapping instances of health care provided under the minister's definition of medical services, which if restricted solely to those rendered by a medical doctor, affect other professions in addition to that of optometry. If the minister is going to table the correspondence he has had from the optometric associations or other individuals, would he also table the correspondence received from the chiropractic associations and individual chiropractors, from dentists and the dental association and from those of the podiatry profession and its association?