

Medicare

scope of the resolution. A resolution preceding a bill to authorize the spending of money comes from His Excellency in the form of a recommendation, and that recommendation must specifically state the purposes for which the money is to be spent. The resolution preceding this bill authorized a measure "for the payment of contributions by Canada toward the cost of insured medical care services"—

• (5:50 p.m.)

Mr. Howe (Hamilton South): May I ask the hon. minister a question?

Mr. MacEachen:—not health care services and not the healing arts, because in each case we recognize that the health professions include a greater magnitude of components than the medical profession. Had His Excellency been asked to include contributions for the health professions, the resolution would have so stated. Therefore, the amendment moved by the hon. member for Hamilton South is seeking to increase the range of the services much beyond what is set forth in the resolution. It is abundantly clear that we have made a certain estimate of the medical care costs. If this amendment were accepted, that estimate would have to be increased by millions of dollars per annum. Since when has it been in order for an hon. member to move to increase the expenditures in the way suggested by this amendment? This never has been done. It has always been ruled out of order. This cannot be done in this case. It is not a matter of arguing that it is a separate issue, although in a way we do provide a broad range of health services. I am in sympathy with much of what has been said, and I should like to deal with it as a matter of substance later on. I am arguing now, however, that the amendment moved by the hon. member for Hamilton South goes beyond the scope of this resolution, because it goes beyond the clear purpose of the expenditure recommended by His Excellency. If this amendment were adopted by the house it would add millions of dollars to the amount contemplated in the message from His Excellency. So, it is clearly out of order.

Mr. Howe (Hamilton South): Mr. Chairman, would the minister permit a question? If subclause (f) were amended to alter the definition of medical practitioner, would this alter your point of view so far as the eligibility of this amendment in respect of paragraph (d) is concerned?

[Mr. MacEachen.]

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Chairman, I am arguing on purely procedural grounds at the present time. If it were changed, it might alter the procedural argument.

Mr. Brand: Surely when the minister is arguing on procedural grounds he is in fact, arguing the definition of medical services. I should like the minister to explain to me how he can say it is not a medical service when an oral surgeon, who is a dentist by profession but nevertheless has taken additional training in oral surgery, works, for example, with a specialist in plastic surgery on the cleft palate of a child. In this case it is necessary that the oral surgeon work in concert, in the same operating room, with the specialist, toward the same end in an effort to produce the repair to the cleft palate. How can the minister say that this is not medical surgery? If he wants to be narrow in his definition, then I can be narrow too. In line 18 in clause 2(d) it says:

"insured services" means all services rendered by medical practitioners that are medically required,—

If the minister wishes to be accurate, then what about the surgical requirements? According to the acts covering the medical profession in the provinces, physicians are licensed to practice medicine, surgery and midwifery. If we are going to be narrow and refer only to medical care and leave out surgical and other related care, then of course we defeat the whole purpose for which the medical care act originally was intended. I think this carries over into the field of the optometrists. We have ophthalmologists who are also looking after eyes and who are prescribing corrective lenses such as the minister himself wears; but there are not enough of these, as I have pointed out before. If it is a medical service when it is being performed by an ophthalmologist, what is it when it is being performed by an optometrist? I should like the minister to answer that. It seems strange to me to note that since these services are provided for in some of the voluntary plans across Canada today, the purpose of this bill will be to destroy all the voluntary plans unless some of these amendments which are proposed by members of the opposition are accepted. It seems strange that you should destroy something which is providing these services and substitute something which does not go as far as the minister would have us believe it does.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Chairman, the minister is asking us to rule this amendment out of order