

Medicare

which he said that the effect of the amendment would be to include or embrace purposes not specified in the resolution. That, I think the minister will agree, is the nub of his argument. Sir, it is with that I take direct issue.

I submit that the minister has not shown and cannot show that the amendment does in fact go beyond the purposes specified in the resolution, or that it includes purposes not specified. The resolution says—I have not my copy, having sent it to the *Hansard* office, but I think I can recall it—that the federal government will make contributions, or that the federal government is authorized to make contributions to the cost of insured medical care services incurred by provinces pursuant to provincial medicare insurance plans.

I have just been handed a copy of the resolution, and at the end I should have said “medical care insurance plans”. That is the only error I made in the quotation. I got the word “care” out of order.

The resolution does not say that the provision is confined to medical practitioners, or to the costs incurred with respect to services rendered by medical practitioners; nor does it say that the provinces have not the right to say that psychologists, chiropractors or anybody else will not be authorized to give services under their plans. The resolution is not restrictive in that sense.

This amendment, on the other hand, does not say that the costs incurred with respect to services rendered by medical practitioners will be paid, even though they are not included within a provincial medical care insurance plan. All this amendment deals with is the definition of medical practitioner.

The bill includes medical practitioners. Provincial schemes include medical practitioners. If, therefore, a provincial scheme defines either now or in future a medical practitioner to include an optometrist, chiropractor, podiatrist or any one of those professions that have been named, the amendment would be within the confines of the resolution, which is that we should authorize the payment of contributions toward the cost of insured medical care services incurred by provinces pursuant to provincial medical care insurance plans.

It is on that simple point, sir, that I take issue with the minister. I submit to you that he has not in law, in logic or indeed under any other definition, established his proposition. He has stated it, yes. He says, “I define medical practitioner, and you cannot define it

otherwise”. He does not say, because he cannot say, how the amendment includes a purpose not specified in or beyond the scope of the resolution.

Mr. P. B. Rynard (Simcoe East): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the minister for his kind remarks. Let me say that hope springs eternal in the human breast. I do, however, want to bring to the minister's attention an anomaly, as I see it, in the field of medicine.

As I understand, the federal government pays for the services of optometrists to look after our Indian population. We have optometrists, as I understand, looking after up to 1,000 Indians and treating them for their eye troubles. We are in a difficult position, because we are saying that optometrists are all right for treating Indians but they are not all right for treating the rest of us. I do not think the minister knows he is in this anomalous position.

The same thing applies to veterans' affairs. For years, surely, we have paid optometrists to take care of veterans' eyes. Are we not saying that optometrists are fit to treat Indians, but not fit to treat the rest of the Canadians? I think this is wrong.

Not only is this principle wrong, and not only is the minister's stand restrictive, but the minister will find himself in another difficult position when the provinces recognize optometrists as medical people. Though the provinces recognize optometrists, we cannot recognize them.

We are in a difficult position and the minister is restricting—and I am sure he is not doing it intentionally—the scope of medical care, or the scope of the medicare bill. The minister is restricting it in more than one way. For instance, last night he said in the house that he was thinking of withdrawing payment to ophthalmologists on refractions, who are doctors caring for eyes. Such a step would be backward looking. I think the minister, on second thought, does not want to do what he suggested last night. I am sure that this house, concerned as it is with the care of the people of Canada, does not want to do it either.

Mr. F. J. Bigg (Athabasca): May I ask a question. The minister referred to paragraph (d) which says, in part:

—all services rendered by medical practitioners—

Leaving aside for the moment whether the medical practitioner means a medical practitioner under our definition or under a provincial definition, and I concede that a province