

*Medicare*

going to be recognized. You are to be excluded from this medical care program which the federal parliament is implementing?

I would also refer to the T1 short individual income tax return. In the description of the deductions that are allowed under medical expenses, on the second page of the explanations you find the following:

The following are the types of expenses you may claim:

(a) Payments to a hospital or qualified medical practitioner, dentist or nurse. (The expression "medical practitioner" includes a qualified chiropractor—

I suggest that if the minister has not checked with the income tax authorities and read this form, he ought to do so. Let me repeat this passage:

(The expression "medical practitioner" includes a qualified chiropractor, Christian Science practitioner, naturopath, optometrist, osteopath, podiatrist or therapist).

• (5:00 p.m.)

It seems to me that if the federal government is going to recognize these particular services under the terms of the Income Tax Act, then they should also include them within the provisions of the medical legislation which is now before us. In addition to this, certain provisions are made under the War Veterans' Allowance Act which recognize these particular fields of health service.

Perhaps I was naïve in suggesting that I would be able to present one or two more arguments which might help to convince the minister he should relax his position with regard to the clause we are now discussing and allow other services to be recognized. However, we are presenting these arguments in this particular context.

I would now like to refer to optometric services. I suppose most hon. members have obtained a copy of the brief which was prepared by the British Columbia Optometric Association entitled "Optometry and Health Care". This brief was written for the purpose of stressing the desirability of including this particular field of health services within the provisions of this bill. On the first page of the brief the following statement is made outlining the qualifications of the optometrist:

An optometrist, Doctor of Optometry (O.D.), is a person specifically educated, trained and provincially licensed to examine the eyes and related structures to determine the presence of vision problems, eye diseases, or other abnormalities. He prescribes and adapts lenses, or other optical aids, and may use visual training when indicated, to restore maximum efficiency of vision.

Farther on in the brief, the following suggestion is made.

"For any service provided in the health program, all practitioners legally licensed by their province to provide such service shall be entitled to participate."

I think this is a fair presentation and a fair request. It seems to me that those who are engaged in providing a health service to our people should be recognized under the provisions of the bill.

With reference to the principle incorporated in the proposed legislation that only medical practitioners will be recognized, I believe it is an unfair one. The services provided by the other health practitioners are often identical with the ones provided by medical practitioners, and yet we find that the services of the medical practitioners are covered whereas the services provided by the other health practitioners are not. I think that this legislation is discriminatory in the worst sense. I believe the singling out of one profession at the expense of the others is unfair. A young man or woman wishing to enter the field of health care will consider this particular provision and say: "Since the government covers medical services provided by medical practitioners and not those provided by others, we had better enter the medical field." I think the entire approach is fundamentally wrong and the minister should not continue to maintain an adamant position with regard to it.

He must not insist that this is as it must be, and as it will be.

The suggestion has been made that the recognition of other health practitioners will not necessarily involve an added cost. I think this is true because the same service is covered when it is performed by a medical practitioner. Therefore, I do not think that the added cost of the plan is an argument. As I stated last night, the plan insures the service and not the practitioner. I think we should keep this particular factor in mind.

I do not propose to take up much more time on this particular clause but I should like to read a letter from the Department of Veterans Affairs addressed to Mr. William H. Wood. It reads as follows:

Dear Sir:

We are in receipt of a report from Doctor P. J. Haayen, Guelph Ontario in which he states that you want chiropractic treatments.

The department cannot approve of the services of a chiropractor. If you wish this treatment it will have to be at your own personal expense.

The same service is available to you through the physiotherapy department at the hospital, and is covered by your Ontario Hospital Insurance that