

Medicare

include these other professions, as experience indicates they are warranted.

● (4:20 p.m.)

Mr. McCleave: Mr. Chairman, I wish to thank the minister for his explanation as to the procedure which would have to be followed in order to amend this bill and bring about changes.

One real danger which we now face is that changes can be made only as a result of an agreement between 11 authorities, that is the parliament of Canada and ten legislatures, yet any important change to this medicare legislation can be vetoed by any one. That is what bothers a number of members on this side of the chamber.

In my earlier remarks I referred to paragraph 213 of the recommendations of the Hall royal commission on health services as providing a means of solving our dilemma. I apologize for misleading the committee by referring them to this recommendation which seems to deal mainly with the title "doctor". The point I wish to make is that the recommendation in respect of the subject we are now dealing with is to be found at page 32 of the first volume of that royal commission report. The recommendation is No. 30 and it reads:

That the medical services benefit include the services of general practitioners and specialists, provided in the office, hospital, patient's home, and group practice clinic.

The medical services benefit should incorporate the following insured services:—

I will not quote them all because they run from (a) to (o), but included among them in (m) is a reference to podiatric and chiropractic treatment prescribed by a physician. This is one of the points we tried to make, albeit unsuccessfully.

The hon. member for Cape Breton North and Victoria referred to certain situations in the Cape Breton coal fields. These services are prescribed by a physician but carried out by experts in various fields such as chiropractic and podiatry. I wanted to indicate that recommendation No. 30 is very clear in this regard.

Mr. Madill: It is my feeling, Mr. Chairman, that when legislation in respect of universal medical services is brought into effect it should be as good or better than those plans already in existence in various parts of Canada underwritten by insurance companies and co-operative associations. I include in this category P.S.I.

[Mr. Herridge.]

P.S.I. first came into existence in the town of Orangeville, in the county of Dufferin in the province of Ontario. If the plan now before us does not provide as many services as are provided by the various plans to which I referred I think we should change it now.

As we all know, osteopaths and chiropractors work with physicians and surgeons in treating veterans in our military hospitals. Our county doctors and nurses, under our school health plans, check the general health of our students including dental health and eye conditions. When these doctors recommend that a student should go to a dentist or an optometrist, I believe those services should be covered. Now, while this bill is being considered clause by clause, is the time to incorporate some of these services. I hope the minister will compare this legislation with some of those plans which have been pioneered and reviewed from time to time in order that all services can be covered by the present legislation. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Muir (Cape Breton North and Victoria): Mr. Chairman, I should like to thank the minister for his kindness in replying to my earlier remarks. He stated that no representations had been received along the lines I suggested from the Canadian Medical Association, and for this I am grateful. I should like to ask him at this time whether he feels that optometrists and chiropractors are providing necessary services in this country, and particularly in the area of Cape Breton island.

The hon. minister is from that area of Canada and has a great deal of experience, having travelled extensively in the area and consulted with the people. I am sure he knows the people there face a situation somewhat similar to that referred to by the hon. member for Kootenay West. These people will have to travel many miles to obtain the services they require under the provisions of the legislation now before us.

Will the minister relent in respect of the two absolutely necessary services provided by optometrists and chiropractors? I am sure there is no part of this country more important to the minister than Cape Breton island, and I realize that I am being parochial in my approach to this situation. Surely, the minister must realize the hardship these people will have to face if these two services are not included. The professions involved will feel discriminated against.

The hon. member for Burnaby-Coquitlam hit the nail on the head when he suggested