

Medicare

The Chairman: I have read very carefully the amendment submitted by the hon. member for Kamloops and I must admit that here too I believe the amendment extends the meaning of "medical services". In extending the meaning of medical services it thereby imposes a charge and because it imposes a charge I would have to rule the amendment out of order.

Mr. Knowles: Mr. Chairman, undaunted I rise to move another amendment to subclause (d) of clause 2. While the minister was perhaps using the recess to go and see the Governor General I picked up a few books on procedure. I recognize that there have been two rulings against amendments which seem to have the effect of enlarging the services which the minister says were contemplated by the resolution and which he contends are implemented as intended in the bill. I believe that my amendment is different in character and is in effect one that makes clear the definition in paragraph (d). If a similar point of order is raised on this amendment, Mr. Chairman, I shall rely on certain citations in Beauchesne's third edition and in May's thirteenth edition, which I believe are quite clear.

In terms of substance may I first point out that we have already made clear through the amendment moved by the hon. member for Hamilton South that we believe there are a number of other services that should be covered in this legislation. Therefore, in now proposing an amendment that would pick out just one of these other services I am in effect trying to get the government to give at some point. In other words, I am trying to get a start somewhere.

We believe that services rendered by optometrists, particularly the kind of services that are on occasion rendered by medical practitioners, should be included and brought under the definition of insured services. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, I move:

That paragraph (d) of clause 2 of Bill C-227 be amended by inserting therein, immediately after the word "required," in line 19, the following words:

"and services rendered by optometrists which, when rendered by a medical practitioner, would be considered as insured services."

I may say, Mr. Chairman, that if this amendment is carried it will be necessary, in my view, to add another paragraph defining optometrists, and I hopefully have that amendment ready. But at this point I am simply urging the proposition that we already have before us a bill designed to pay the costs of insured medical care services, and we have

[Mr. MacEachen.]

identified medical care services as the kind of services rendered by medical practitioners. I am talking about a service of the kind rendered by medical practitioners, but in many instances this care is in fact rendered by optometrists.

Let me repeat, Mr. Chairman. We are talking about the same kind of care, and this after all is what is involved in this clause. It is not merely a question of who renders the care but of the kind of care being rendered.

We are prepared for the purpose of this amendment to accept the restriction that it has to be the kind of care rendered by medical practitioners. I therefore submit that because in many cases optometrists render the kind of care that medical practitioners sometimes render, optometrists should be covered when they are rendering that kind of service.

That Mr. Chairman, is the reason I move the amendment I have already read to the committee, adding the words I have indicated to paragraph (d). The result would be that paragraph (d) would read:

"insured services" means all services rendered by medical practitioners that are medically required, and services rendered by optometrists which, when rendered by a medical practitioner, would be considered as insured services, except any services that a person is eligible for and entitled to under any other Act of the Parliament of Canada or under any law of a province relating to workmen's compensation;

While I am on my feet, as ministers say on orders of the day, I would indicate, Mr. Chairman, that if this amendment carries I will move an amendment defining optometrists which would be inserted after the present paragraph (g) so that it would be in the correct alphabetical order.

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Chairman, I regret the necessity of rising once more on a point of order, but in substance what the hon. member for Winnipeg North Centre is attempting to achieve in this amendment is to include a new profession within the scope of the bill.

● (8:20 p.m.)

The hon. member for Hamilton South moved an amendment containing the words "and such other health and paramedical services as may be included in a provincial medical health care insurance plan." One of the principal illustrations used was the optometric profession. The hon. member for Kamloops proposed an amendment using the words "or by or on the advice or with the consent of medical practitioners." One of the new professions that would be brought in by