

Medicare

place a ceiling on the amount of money which was intended to be devoted to that purpose. Then the bill comes in and the minister finds that it provides only for the cost of his meals and clothing. He says, "Oh, but what about the rent of my house? That is a living expense". Then I say, "Oh, no; I didn't mean that. I didn't intend to include the rent of the house. I only meant that it should include your meals and your clothing and therefore you are bound by my interpretation." Would you not be inclined to say, Mr. Chairman, "You cannot make that arbitrary limitation now because living expenses, in any normal and sensible interpretation of the words, include rent." Of course you would say that, Mr. Chairman. But the minister invites you to say the contrary now because he invites you to agree with him that when he used the words "insured medical care services" he intended to exclude, he says now, services rendered by those other than licensed medical doctors. But he did not say so in the resolution. Nor did he put a limit on the amount of money the government was prepared to devote to the purposes of the bill based on the resolution.

I submit to you, sir, that that homely illustration indicates that the minister's argument simply will not stand up. It is not realistic. If the minister had attached a money limitation or if he had said at the time of his speech in respect of the resolution that he did not intend to cover the services of anyone but medical doctors, there might be no question but that this amendment would be out of order. But he did not say that. So, not having said it in his speech or in the resolution and indeed having given a clear indication that the bill was intended to cover the services of persons in related fields, there is no question but that the amendment is in order. I am tempted to go on to argue on the merits, but I think that aspect of the argument speaks for itself and I will confine myself to the point of order.

Mr. Winkler: Mr. Chairman, my hon. friend from Kamloops has discussed the technical side of the point of order. I suggest to you, Mr. Chairman, that there is a very practical side to the argument. From a personal point of view I might say that it would be perhaps wise for us on the opposition side to stay in our seats, pass the entire bill and get it over with, because the minister seems very adamant in his view and very unco-operative in his approach to assisting the people of Canada and everyone who will be affected by this bill. I suggest there is a very practical side to the bill of which the minister obviously refuses to

[Mr. Fulton.]

take cognizance and refuses to look at. I would be inclined even to go so far as to say that instead of having Bill C-227 as it now stands we should eliminate the bill and bring in some kind of political aid bill to bring the minister to his senses.

First of all, there is the political aspect of this bill. One of the things which has happened here is that apparently the minister has become so determined because of his political situation that he has argued with his cabinet colleagues that he is going to stand by this bill, and even though he might have said something else previously he is prepared to forget what he said. He is prepared to take the position that that does not matter. He is not going to let any other matter interfere with this bill. He is saying, I have to prove my position in the cabinet: I am going forward come hell or high water. That is precisely how the situation looks tonight.

● (8:00 p.m.)

Let me suggest a practical aspect of the amendment before us now. Apparently the minister is not aware of this fact, but because I know he is not a particularly stupid man I am sure he must realize what is taking place in the offices of physicians this year. I am sure the hon. member for Simcoe East will back up what I say. Every practitioner is so busy he does not know how to deal with the number of patients currently visiting his office. Many of these patients require only the services of a nurse. They may require a shot for one thing or another and really do not need the services of a doctor or the services provided at a hospital. The minister has already referred to the current situation in respect of nurses.

The minister has ignored accepted practice. Perhaps he has been in touch with the ministers of health in each of the provinces where medical insurance is available to the residents. It may be that the provinces do not want anything more than is provided by this bill. Perhaps they want plans which require payment by everyone. I would be inclined to doubt that, but if that is the case surely the minister should inform us. We should like to know whether the minister is prepared to accept any amendments to clause 2. I have not been present during the entire debate on this clause and therefore do not know whether he has given any indication in this regard, but I doubt that he is prepared to accept any amendments.