

*Medicare*

amendments or allow some amendments to be made in order to broaden the terms of this particular clause.

I endeavoured to get the floor several times yesterday, but seemed to run into procedural obstructions. Therefore, I hope I have better success today. I believe that the whole of this debate could have been avoided had the minister and the government introduced a proposal based upon the provisions of provincial plans. The various provincial governments have their own plans in operation. There are some variations as far as insured coverage is concerned, but I do not think they are so different that the types of services that are to be covered in this particular plan require spelling out detail. Therefore, had the government introduced a proposal that was based on the provincial plans, it would have saved a great deal of debate and misunderstanding.

I believe that the interpretation placed upon this particular clause is far too restricted. We recognize the importance of every health service provided in this nation, not only by medical practitioners but by many other professional men. These people are recognized, authorized and licensed by provincial governments and provincial authorities just as are the services of medical practitioners. Therefore, it would seem to me that in inaugurating a plan under which the federal government would contribute to the cost of these services, it should be made all-inclusive and should not be restricted to the interpretation the minister has placed upon it.

I further believe that these services should be provided on their own merit and not through a referral by the medical practitioner. I believe that the people of this country ought to be able to make their choice and go to whatever health practitioner they desire in order to seek help and assistance. It should not be necessary for them to go to any particular one, and then proceed on a program of referrals from one to another. It seems to me this is not only unfair but is improper and should not be recognized in this proposal. Reference has been made to a number of people who are engaged in the health services field. I shall refer to two or three this afternoon and try to point out some other reasons why they should be included within the terms of this measure.

First of all, I should like to refer to those engaged in the chiropractic field. These services, as I stated before, should be included within the terms of this legislation. It has been brought to our attention, and I did get

[Mr. Patterson.]

an opportunity last evening to make at least this brief interjection, that at the present time medical practitioners are being given a very short course in the therapy that is provided by chiropractors. The course lasts one hour, two days or up to five days. Then, they are able to provide the service that chiropractors would provide. I do not believe this is wise because, after all, chiropractors take a course that stretches over a period of four or five years. It would seem to me they would be much better qualified to provide this service than medical practitioners who have had only one hour's or up to five day's training in this field.

It has also been brought to my attention that the Quebec La Croix royal commission report referred to the inadequate training being thus obtained and stated that it constitutes a grave danger. They give warning against the practice of giving a very short course in this particular field of health care. The report of that royal commission also states that chiropractors are well qualified in this field of treatment. I call your attention, Mr. Chairman, to the fact that this report was approved and accepted by the Hall commission. In view of the fact that the minister is basing many of his proposals upon the recommendations of the Hall commission, and many arguments are being advanced in this debate based upon the recommendations of that royal commission, we ought to remember this reference to the need for recognizing and approving the services provided by chiropractors.

There are several other reasons for believing that those engaged in the chiropractic field ought to be recognized in the provisions of this measure. They are recognized in the Health Resources Fund Act. I understand they are able to obtain assistance from this particular federal provision. I submit that if the services rendered by this profession are recognized and provided for under the Health Resources Fund Act, there is absolutely no reason why they should not be recognized under the terms of the measure we are now contemplating.

I also understand it is possible for those who are entering this particular field of health service to obtain assistance through the Student Loans Act. Therefore, Mr. Chairman, what is the use of providing young men and young women with funds in order that they may qualify themselves in this particular field, if the federal government is going to turn around and say: Your services are not