

*Inquiries of the Ministry***HEALTH****MEDICARE—POSSIBLE INCLUSION OF DENTAL CARE FOR CHILDREN—GOVERNMENT PRIORITY FOR EXTENSION OF SERVICES**

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, I wish to direct a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. In view of the growing requests from both community and professional organizations to expand the medicare program to include dental care programs for children, I want to ask the minister if he is prepared to indicate to the provinces that the federal government would be willing to pass the necessary Order in Council extending the medicare program to include dental care for children?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I cannot agree with the premise of the hon. member's remarks that the provinces, or some of the provinces, are pressing for dental care. It seems to me that various provinces have different priorities. Some feel that medicare should be expanded to include drugs as a priority over dental care. Some are pressing for other paramedical personnel to be covered rather than dentistry first. I think there is really no consensus developing among the provinces for dentistry per se.

Mr. Douglas: Mr. Speaker, I agree with the minister that there may be some differences of opinion with respect to the priorities that the various provinces have established. May I ask him what is the priority of the federal government with respect to the next step in a comprehensive health insurance program? Is the minister seriously considering dental care for children as an essential next step?

• (1220)

Mr. Munro: Mr. Speaker, it is the government view that dental care is very important indeed but to answer the question specifically as to whether we have come to a decision on our preference, no, we have not formally come to that decision but we are giving it consideration at the moment.

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BUSINESS OF THE HOUSE**POSSIBILITY OF RETURNING AFTER EASTER IN TIME TO PARTICIPATE IN PRESIDENT NIXON'S VISIT**

Mr. Thomas M. Bell (Saint John-Lancaster): Mr. Speaker, perhaps I may rephrase the question which the hon. member for Huron addressed to the government House leader. Regardless of whether we come back on April 10 from the Easter recess, can the House leader assure us that we will be back in time for the memorable visit of the President so that we can take part in it in some form?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (President of the Privy Council): Yes, Mr. Speaker, probably the motion will indicate that we will come back on Thursday which is the day the President's visit begins.

Mr. Bell: Does the House leader realize that if we are not back then and are not given an opportunity to take

[Mr. Speaker.]

part, the government might be accused of a fast political shuffle with the President with an election coming up?

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh!

Mr. MacEachen: Mr. Speaker, people would not suggest that at all.

Mr. Hees: They are suggesting it already.

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AGRICULTURE**POSSIBLE CROP DIVERSIONS TO RELIEVE ECONOMIC BURDEN—MARKET OUTLOOK FOR 1972**

Mr. H. W. Danforth (Kent-Essex): Mr. Speaker, I should like to address a question to the Minister of Agriculture. Based on the fact that we are on the eve of another crop year and that for the past two years the government has sent missions including officials of the Department of Industry, Trade and Commerce to various countries in order to study market demands and new products, may I ask the minister if he is now prepared to recommend to producers of agricultural products, especially in eastern Canada, any new crops or any crop diversion that might relieve some of the economic burden they now face?

Hon. H. A. Olson (Minister of Agriculture): Mr. Speaker, I do not have at my fingertips, or off the top of my head, information on some new product that has not been produced before. However, two weeks ago or thereabouts there was an updated report from the outlook conference and producers will have available to them that updated prospectus on what the market demand for various commodities may be for the 1972 production year.

Mr. Danforth: Based on all the research, the task force reports and the meetings of the various commodity groups, has the Department of Agriculture no new crops to recommend or no new crop measures to recommend to agriculture at this time?

Mr. Olson: Mr. Speaker, what has come out of the research branch are new varieties and that sort of thing. If the hon. member is asking whether there is some completely new type of crop or product to be produced, I do not think we are in a position to say that there is a commercial, viable market for some of them although there are several that are being tried experimentally to test the market.

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FISHERIES**INCIDENT WITH RUSSIAN SHIP—REQUEST FOR STATEMENT**

Mr. James A. McGrath (St. John's East): Mr. Speaker, in the absence of the Minister of Fisheries, perhaps his parliamentary secretary would take my question as notice. Would the minister be prepared to make a statement in the House or at least a reply giving details of an incident which took place a short time ago between a Russian ship