Members of this committee will recall that the staff question was one of the principal points raised in the report of the special committee on new drugs of the Royal College of Physicians and Surgeons, which I tabled in the house last week.

I hope this committee will examine its report most exhaustively, as I consider that the findings and recommendations are of the greatest value.

Dr. Brien, the committee chairman, will be available for any enquiries you may wish to direct to him, and I am sure that his research into the systems employed by governments other than our own could also be of benefit to you.

Dr. Brien's committee felt that the staff of the food and drug directorate was not as large as it should be.

We are aware of this and have for some time been trying, with some success, to increase staff there.

Its director, Dr. C. A. Morrell, is here today to appear before the committee and will be available to answer questions in an effort to give you a complete picture of the directorate's operations.

There have been suggestions—and there will probably be more—that the directorate increase its staff to the point where it can conduct original research into all drugs introduced in Canada.

Some seem to think that too much onus is placed on the companies and not enough collaborating research is performed by the policing agency.

Our firm conviction is that we must insist a manufacturer accept full responsibility for something he puts his name on and sells to the general public.

Any softening of this conviction could result in the weakening of one of the principal elements of our control program for the protection of the public.

This does not mean our responsibility is lessened or that we are relying on the companies to do everything.

Our job is to see—to insist—that the companies do their job and, from time to time, to check on their work, and to carry on sufficient research and investigation in our own establishment to be able to not only check the work of the manufacturer, but to form well-based opinion on the quality of the work being done with a special eye open to possible dangers to the consumer.

Under the present system, manufacturers are required to submit detailed reports on the development and testing of drugs—tracing this process through laboratory and clinical stages. Our experts can—and do—detect shortcomings by scruitinizing these reports. They then require supplementary information.

To have our people retrace the experiments already conducted by the manufacturers would appear to be cumbersome and unnecessary. It would mean a gigantic staff, needless repetition, huge cost, and, in effect, might lead to eventual subsidization of the industry.

I don't think we could justify this to the taxpayer.

The present system has worked well. Our Food and Drugs Act is second to none in the world. It has been used as a model by the World Health Organization.

It sometimes takes years for drugs to win approval of the food and drug experts—some never do. Companies are repeatedly asked for additional information.

In the last 11 years, the directorate has passed some 2,000 new drugs through its screening process with results that were not questioned until very recently.

In other words, every possible care now is taken to ensure that Canadians are protected. And the system now used appears to be working.

But there can be improvements in any undertaking. We are looking to this special committee to make valuable suggestions for such improvements.