

Inquiries of the Ministry

has stated, freedom in the use of the mails, and I would not have my question interpreted in that way. What I had in mind, and perhaps I did not make it clear in my question, was that there was an element of fraud in this case because the paper in question which was being circulated through the mail was in a form which would confuse it with a non-communist Czech language paper. Therefore I thought there was an element of fraud in this particular case which might have involved a contravention of the law, and that action might have been taken in that regard.

Mr. Hamilton (Notre Dame de Grace): What I meant by my answer was that the determination of fraud is within the province of the courts and not that of the Post Office Department.

ALLEGED ABANDONMENT OF ELECTRONIC SORTER

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Egan Chambers (St. Lawrence-St. George): Would the Postmaster General care to comment on a report in this morning's *Gazette* that the \$3 million electronic sorter which the former Liberal government installed in the main post office is a failure and about to be abandoned?

Hon. W. M. Hamilton (Postmaster General): There is no more accurate foundation for that report than for the one which appeared in the same column yesterday to the effect that the citizens of Westmount were disturbed because of changes in their mail delivery. This is a machine which is basically, at the moment, a research project, and as in all these research projects it is currently again in the process of being reassessed to determine its value and its future potential. Certainly there is no decision as yet regarding its abandonment or anything of that nature.

HEALTH AND WELFARE

STANDARD OF TREATMENT OF MENTALLY ILL

On the orders of the day:

Mr. H. F. Jones (Saskatoon): Mr. Speaker, I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. By way of explanation I should like to say that in the throne speech debate on May 26, *Hansard*, page 451, I suggested that the government consider the advisability of encouraging the provision of the same standard of care for the mentally sick that is afforded the physically ill. Can the minister inform the house what measures are being taken to improve the standards of care for the mentally ill?

Hon. J. W. Monteith (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I want to thank the hon. member for giving me notice of his intention to ask this question. As far as

[Mr. Pearson.]

the dominion government is concerned, three avenues of approach are being taken toward improving the standards of care for the mentally ill.

In the first place, an annual grant of over \$7 million is provided under the health grants program to assist the provinces in developing and extending their facilities in this field. Over the past 10 years this money has been used for the establishment of mental health and child guidance clinics, the extension of mental health services in general hospitals, the provision of staff and equipment for mental hospitals, the establishment and enlargement of provincial divisions of mental health, the support of research into mental health problems and the training of mental health workers.

In addition to this assistance, the health grants program contains a hospital construction grant under which federal funds amounting to \$2,000 per bed are available for the construction of mental hospitals as well as of general hospitals, some of the facilities of which are utilized in treating the acute as opposed to the chronic phases of mental illness.

A third way in which the government is helping to raise the standards of care for the mentally ill is through the hospital insurance and diagnostic services program. This scheme takes into account the recent development of psychiatric wards in general hospitals for the active treatment of acute phases of mental illness, and includes the costs of this kind of care within the expenses to be shared by federal and provincial governments.

The whole purpose of these endeavours is to place the standards of care for the mentally ill on the active treatment level instead of on the custodial care level, which in large measure was the case in the past.

Mr. Hazen Argue (Assiniboia): I wonder if I might ask a supplementary question arising out of this excellent review of what the government has been doing in this field. I wonder whether the minister can say whether active consideration is now being given to the inclusion of mentally ill persons in hospitals under the national hospital insurance act, since about half the hospital patients are involved?

Mr. Monteith (Perth): There has been no change in the situation since I answered that question at the time the amendment to the Hospital Insurance and Diagnostic Services Act was before the house a short time ago.