

Inquiries of the Ministry

decreased so that the number of patients at St. Hyacinthe hospital is constantly decreasing and we expect a further decrease when the new hospital at Quebec opens in the spring for the treatment of tuberculous veterans in that district.

For the efficient treatment of tuberculous patients, we must have the necessary installations, such as clinical laboratories, X-ray apparatus, a department of physiotherapy and occupational therapy, as well as operating rooms. Owing to the reduction in the number of patients at St. Hyacinthe, it is becoming more and more difficult to find sufficient personnel to provide all those sections with the kind of services we wish to give them. But we already have the necessary installation at Ste. Anne de Bellevue, where we can adequately house this limited number of patients. We therefore propose to transfer the veterans still hospitalized at St. Hyacinthe to Ste. Anne de Bellevue hospital before October, 1954. Several persons now employed at St. Hyacinthe will be transferred to Ste. Anne, if they so desire, where they may continue to fulfil their present duties.

I wish to assure the hon. member for St. Hyacinthe-Bagot, who has shown special interest in this matter, that several other members on the hospital staff, whose services will not be required at Ste. Anne, will be able to keep on working at St. Hyacinthe for the Department of National Health and Welfare, which will take over the hospital when it is vacated by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

(Text):

WATER POLLUTION**NORTH SASKATCHEWAN RIVER—INQUIRY AS TO FURTHER ACTION**

On the orders of the day:

Mr. W. A. Tucker (Rosthern): I should like to direct a question to the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Since he last spoke in this house about the matter, has he anything further to report on a possible solution to the pollution problem in the North Saskatchewan river?

Hon. Paul Martin (Minister of National Health and Welfare): I am glad to have had notice of my hon. friend's question. I believe it will be agreed that the hon. member is perhaps one of the few in this house who

[Mr. Lapointe.]

have had an opportunity of seeing the situation, as I understand he recently visited the scene of pollution. I thought it might be useful if I just said by way of answer that yesterday, after the return of Dr. Charron from the scene of operation in Edmonton, I sent the following telegram to the minister of health in Alberta, Dr. Cross. The telegram reads as follows:

Hon. Dr. Cross
Minister of Health, Edmonton, Alta.

I understand that some progress is being made toward the identification of the offending substances. I am further informed that an intensive investigation has been launched using all available federal, provincial and industrial resources. Nevertheless there is no assurance of an early solution to this problem. Meanwhile, the distress of all of the affected communities is one of growing aggravation and I am accordingly wiring to obtain direct information from you as to what measures are being contemplated by your province towards and pending solution of this problem.

As you may be aware, from the reports of the discussions that have taken place in parliament, the federal government considers that in so far as jurisdiction is involved, the situation is one that would appear to be a matter for provincial authorities.

In order however that I may answer the various questions that are directed to me as well as knowing wherein the federal government could be of further assistance, it would be most helpful if I could know something of the measures that are being taken by your government in this connection. I have of course in mind the procedure which is provided in the public health act, whereby your provincial board of health has supervision over the source of public water supplies with reference to purity and wide authority for the investigation and determination of complaints arising from industrial wastes and other pollutants affecting such water.

I would assume that your provincial board of health has already taken active steps in this connection and that in due course it will be prepared to make such recommendations and initiate such action as may be required. Some word from you, however, on this would of course be most helpful.

Apart altogether from the correction of the present problem, there would seem to arise the overall and long-term question of the extent to which the waters of the North Saskatchewan river can reasonably be utilized to receive industrial wastes from your expanding chemical industries. I appreciate that there are a number of industries situated along this river that have for some time past used the waters for the disposal of industrial wastes. It may be that until the recent use of the river for this purpose by the Canadian Chemical Company the flow of water was of itself sufficient to neutralize the other wastes which were being deposited and that the recent addition has brought the matter far beyond the toleration point. If this should be so, then with the possibility of other industries seeking to use the river for disposal of industrial wastes, it would seem quite clear and apart from the immediate problem, that wholly different measures would need to be employed by the industries in order to permit of the reasonable use of the river for disposal purposes.

There are accordingly two problems that arise, the first relating to the measures which your government propose to initiate to correct the present