

Questions

Hon. E. J. Benson (Minister of Finance):

1. Yes, when sold to or imported by municipalities for their own use and not for resale.

2. No. The government has exempted from federal sales tax a limited number of items which are purchased by municipalities as a measure of assistance to these bodies.

FREE DENTAL SERVICE FOR INDIANS

Question No. 1,574—**Mr. Burton:**

1. Are people of Indian origin entitled to free health services for the extraction of teeth and, if so, on what basis is this service provided?

2. Are people of Indian origin entitled to free service for filling of teeth or work on dentures and, if so, on what basis is this service provided?

3. If there is any difference in the service provided in Parts 1 and 2, what is the rationale for such differences?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): 1 and 2. Not by treaty or statute. The federal government has always taken the position that responsibility for health lies in this order: (a) With the individual; (b) With his group; (c) Within the provincial programs.

Only when these three resources fail to meet requirements does the federal government become involved. This position is supported by the fact that traditionally and constitutionally health care services have been the responsibility of the provinces for all residents within each province.

Many of these people of Indian origin, however, either live in isolated areas or are indigent and thus are unable to obtain or pay for dental or medical attention in the ordinary way. Each year Parliament appropriates a certain sum of money for the provision of public health and essential dental and medical care for this group. To ensure that funds are used for the purpose intended, it is necessary to establish certain criteria concerning the acceptability of individuals for assistance, and to place certain limits upon those services which medical services is prepared to approve.

The acceptability of any individual is governed by the following conditions: 1. A patient must be listed on a Register for an Indian Agency; 2. The patient must be medically/dentally indigent, or so isolated that the costs of transportation associated with procuring necessary treatment would place such care beyond normal economic means; 3. No other Agency, e.g., Provincial, D.V.A., Workmen's Compensation Board, Insurance, etc., has responsibility for payment of the account;

4. When an Indian has established residence away from a Reserve or his Indian community for a period long enough to qualify him for assistance from a Provincial, Municipal or any other organization, he generally ceases to be acceptable for assistance from Medical Services.

The objective of the Indian Health Program is to provide or arrange for health services for eligible Indians in order to assist them in achieving a standard of health comparable to that of other provincial residents. Indian groups are, in most provinces, receiving the same benefits under hospital and medicare plans as all other citizens. Where special needs above and beyond what provincial programs provide are required, the federal government endeavours to augment provincial services.

3. N/A.

COMPETITION NO. 69-NHW-NB-1, DEPARTMENT OF NATIONAL HEALTH AND WELFARE

Question No. 1,583—**Mr. MacRae:**

1. Was competition number 69-NHW-NB-1 for CR4, Department of National Health and Welfare, Fredericton, withdrawn and, if so, for what reason?

2. Was Quebec included in the area from which an appointment could be made under competition number 70-NHW-NB-1 for CR4 positions in the above department, Fredericton, and if so, for what reason?

3. Are there any fully qualified people in the Fredericton office to fill the position being advertised?

4. Are employees with long service disqualified from promotion under this system?

5. Was an assessment of staff requirements made in the Fredericton office, Department of National Health and Welfare, before the above competition was announced?

6. If appointments are made, and assessment then carried out, could there be layoffs of employees with long service but who are not bilingual?

[Translation]

Hon. Gérard Pelletier (Secretary of State):

1. Yes. To prescribe knowledge of both official languages as an essential qualification.

2. Yes. To increase the number of potential candidates with knowledge of both official languages.

3. The selection board for this competition has not yet received the applications.

4. No.

5. Yes.

6. No lay-offs from the unit concerned have been or are being considered.