

Inquiries of the Ministry

collective agreement that was in the best interests of its Canadian members, I would be obliged to have another look at my labour bill C-253 which is before the House and include a provision to prevent this type of harassment.

Some hon. Members: Hear, hear!

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REGIONAL ECONOMIC EXPANSION**IMPROVEMENT OF DEPARTMENTAL OPERATIONS IN LIGHT OF CRITICISMS**

Mr. Robert Muir (Cape Breton-The Sydneys): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of Regional Economic Expansion. In light of the fact that the chairman of the Nova Scotia Voluntary Economic Planning Board, Mr. A. R. Harrington, and the president of the Maritime Provinces Board of Trade, Mr. Joseph Zatzman, have added their voices to those of the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council and declared that DREE's record during its first 30 months of operation is disappointing, has the minister or the government any plans to make DREE's activities more fruitful?

Hon. Jean Marchand (Minister of Regional Economic Expansion): Mr. Speaker, I answered a question in exactly the same terms a few minutes ago.

Mr. Muir: Is the minister aware that the Atlantic Provinces Economic Council has attributed DREE's ineffectiveness to its failure to establish firm policy lines and the government's "inept handling of the national economy"?

Mr. Speaker: Order, please.

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ROYAL CANADIAN MOUNTED POLICE**PARTICIPATION IN MARIJUANA EXPERIMENT**

Mr. Erik Nielsen (Yukon): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Solicitor General. Have any members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police volunteered or been invited or instructed to participate in the controlled experiment with respect to the use of marijuana? If so, have they also been instructed not to "bust" other participants?

[Translation]

Hon. Jean-Pierre Goyer (Solicitor General): Not to my knowledge, Mr. Speaker, but I will inquire.

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[English]

HEALTH**DISCUSSION WITH PROVINCES OF INCLUSION OF MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT UNDER MEDICARE—DISCONTINUANCE OF CERTAIN GRANTS**

Mr. Randolph Harding (Kootenay West): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Are any discussions under way with the prov-

[Mr. Mackasey.]

inces to include mental health treatment as a cost-shared item under medicare?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Not in those direct terms, Mr. Speaker. There are discussions under way with the provinces with respect to altering the cost-sharing arrangements under the medicare and hospitalization acts. If the arrangements were altered this would affect cost-sharing in the area of mental health.

Mr. Harding: Are present federal health grants to the provinces for mental health, t.b., cancer, etc., being phased out? If so, what is the deadline set for the discontinuance of these grants?

Mr. Munro: Mr. Speaker, grants such as these have gradually been phased out over a period of years and replaced by national health grants. Many of these grants were originally designed to assist the provinces many years ago to get their health department programs under way. Since then, of course, these programs have become very sophisticated.

MEDICARE AND HOSPITALIZATION—DISCUSSION WITH PROVINCES ON ACCEPTANCE OF FULL COST IN RETURN FOR FIXED FISCAL EQUIVALENT

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Are discussions under way with the provinces with a view to persuading the provinces to accept the full cost of operating medicare and hospitalization plans in return for a fixed fiscal equivalent?

Hon. John C. Munro (Minister of National Health and Welfare): No, Mr. Speaker, this is not the design or intent of the discussions we have been having with the provinces. We have been talking to the provinces about new financial arrangements, perhaps along the lines of some per capita formula, and we have also been insisting upon uniform standards, and so on. These are, in general, the sort of discussions we have been having with the provinces, largely in response, I might add, to a request by the provinces that there be a greater degree of flexibility in the cost-sharing arrangements regarding health care which would enable them to get other programs under way.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, I apologize for asking another supplementary question but the subject is important. Am I to understand, therefore, that the government is not now pressing forward with the idea of getting out of these cost-sharing plans in the health field entirely and substituting for these plans a fiscal equivalent?

Mr. Munro: Mr. Speaker, these discussions are not about the federal government getting out of this area at all. They are an effort on our part to make a positive response to a request of the provinces for some different type of financial arrangements which will allow them to have a greater say about their own priorities in the health field.