

efficiently run. I thought that rather than have each person call the poison control centre which might have very little actual knowledge, perhaps one efficient control centre should be set up. What is your opinion on this?

Mr. MORRELL: We have taken no active interest in how the poison control centres are established and what they consist of. We felt that was entirely out of our jurisdiction and that it was in the hands of the provinces and of the provincial departments of health, or whoever control the hospitals. We have avoided even making the suggestion. All I know is perhaps not more than what you know and what you have heard.

Mr. ROXBURGH: Should we not make a recommendation on that from this committee? It seems to me that this is becoming more and more important. I must admit that as a layman I had not even heard about it before and I do not mind saying this; but it seems to me that with our increased awareness of insecticides and pesticides and even ordinary headache tablets, an overdose of which produced in Canada last year 25 per cent of the deaths, or whatever it may be, we should perhaps pay more special attention to it. Naturally, we are a federal body and this is controlled by the provinces, but we do have a provincial and federal get-together at the present time. Could we not have something similar on this subject? Have you any opinion on this, not necessarily as a medical man but in your capacity as director of the food drug directorate?

Mr. MORRELL: I am not a medical man. As I have said, I have not really studied it. I have heard that some centres are better than others but I do not quite know why they are better. It may depend on the personnel, their interest and enthusiasm as well as their knowledge. I would not like to say officially, or even unofficially, with my lack of knowledge, what should constitute a proper poison control centre. I am sure there must be people who could advise you on that.

Mr. ROXBURGH: Mr. Chairman, I was wondering under what heading we could take this up? Which department is the one that should take this up, or do we just sit here and do nothing about it?

The CHAIRMAN: The committee is free to make any recommendation that it may want. Some of the things that we may recommend will actually fall under provincial jurisdiction. There is no reason why this cannot be part of our report.

Mr. MITCHELL: It seems to me that these poison control centres, as far as they are part of hospitals and under provincial jurisdiction, are voluntary, are they not?

Mr. WHELAN: I suggest they should not be.

Mr. MITCHELL: The hospital act does not oblige them to set up poison control centres if they do not wish to do so.

Mr. LEDUC: It starts out by being voluntary; some hospital may want to have a poison control centre. They will then write to us telling us that they want the information. We tell them to get in touch with their own minister of health, as he is the one who can authorize them to do so. If he gives them the authority, they inform us of this and then we send out the information.

Mr. MITCHELL: It is still voluntary on the part of the hospitals.

Mr. ROXBURGH: Could we make suggestions which could be directed to the provinces to come up with some legislation on this? What is your idea on it, Dr. Rynard?

Mr. RYNARD: I think this is a real problem. I think we could make a recommendation to the Ontario hospital commission that they check their hospitals