

Inquiries of the Ministry
HEALTH AND WELFARE

REQUEST FOR REPORT ON CONFERENCE ON
SMOKING AND CANCER

On the orders of the day:

Mr. Barry Mather (New Westminster): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Would the minister give us a report on the discussions and dealings at her successful national conference on the relationship between smoking and disease?

Hon. Judy V. LaMarsh (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, I would like to thank the hon. member for having given me notice that he would ask such a question. In the gallery at the moment there are some representatives of the industry and individuals who were present at the conference, which lasted for a day and a half. The conference was also attended by representatives of the departments of health of each of the 10 provinces and in some cases representatives of the departments of education and of youth, as well as the voluntary health agencies, the cancer society, heart foundation, public health institute and representatives of the growers from the provinces of Ontario and Quebec.

As a result of a very co-operative day and a half the provincial representatives agreed unanimously on the fact that smoking is harmful, and agreed to undertake co-operatively a program of education and research directed toward young people in the country and their commencing the habit. The federal government then announced it was prepared to put up \$400,000 for a program of education which would be addressed to adults, which education would take the form of a positive program and not a program based on fear. In addition the federal government announced that it is prepared to expend the sum of \$200,000 to add to funds already available for research on lung cancer and motivational research into the smoking habit—why it is picked up and why it persists so strongly.

May I say that notwithstanding the obvious conflict of personal interest the conference proceeded in a spirit of great co-operation, in a spirit of moderation, and with a real concern for something which, it agrees, has become a national health problem in Canada.

Mr. G. H. Aiken (Parry Sound-Muskoka): I should like to ask the minister if this allocation of \$600,000 is reflected in the estimates now before us or in supplementary estimates, or whether it will be included in a later supplementary estimate.

Miss LaMarsh: I omitted to say that there would be a technical committee set up at once to deal with the specifics of the program. As

[Mr. McIlraith.]

the hon. member knows, the estimates which are now before the house are not estimates which were prepared during the time the present government has been in office. It is expected this sum will be included in the next estimates.

An hon. Member: For 1964-65.

Mr. P. B. Rynard (Simcoe East): I wonder if this information will be available to the press and to members here as well as to members of the other place, so that we may know what went on at this conference.

Miss LaMarsh: Apart from the briefs prepared by my department, briefs were prepared by each of the agencies involved. Though they were invited to bring sufficient copies for distribution to the press and to interested people, they did not bring copies in any great numbers. Representatives of the press were invited to a press conference last evening, and they were given copies of all the briefs where additional copies were available; and of course delegates were free to discuss with members of the press what had been going on. I have made myself available to the press to answer any questions which might be raised. As to the specific programs, these will be announced after the working groups have met and determined on them.

Mr. Rynard: I wonder if I may ask when this material will be available to members of the house. Is there a printed record of the meetings, with recommendations and so forth?

Miss LaMarsh: No, there is not. Reading of the briefs took up much of the time. On behalf of the department some notes were made of the discussion, but there will be no printed record. As I indicated previously, it was the intention to hold these meetings in camera so that discussion might not be inhibited by the possibility of material being extracted from the proceedings as they went along which might not be supported by later submissions.

Mr. Joseph Slogan (Springfield): I wonder if the minister can indicate whether there was any discussion at this conference with regard to the restriction of cigarette advertising in Canada. Could she tell us what attitude the conference took toward the extensive advertising of cigarettes in this country?

Miss LaMarsh: Mr. Speaker, there was a discussion with regard to advertising. It was pointed out that the cigarette industry had itself voluntarily restricted its television advertising to the period after nine o'clock in the evening. We discussed various aspects of