

Supply—Health and Welfare

charge of \$1 per drug prescription. I protested, Mr. Chairman, that I did not say it. I referred to the fact the royal commission had mentioned this as a way of raising money or as a deterrent charge, and I used this as one example which was given in the health report, certainly without indicating the government would adopt or approve such a proposal. Despite the very vigorous address of my hon. friend, I cannot hold out any hope there will be a change in attitude because the disagreement is fundamental and basic, notwithstanding the very good relationship there is between the Prime Minister and myself, and the premier of Alberta and the minister of health there, with whom I have had many discussions. It is felt that the authorized charge cannot be increased without the necessity then of reducing the federal contribution. There is no question but that Alberta can, if it chooses, increase from \$1.50 or \$2 to \$5 the amount they wish to charge someone who is ill to go into hospital. This would simply mean the federal government would not share, in the same proportion which it presently does, the total cost of hospitalization.

Mr. Olson: If I misinterpreted anything the minister said, I want to apologize for that. Perhaps I did not hear her say that the thoughts she was expressing were some of the recommendations in the Hall report.

I should like to ask her if the premier of Saskatchewan, Premier Thatcher, has made any representations to her department to get the concurrence of the department with regard to the dispensation that would be made of deterrent fees? I understand he is seriously considering this as a valid and proper way of raising some of the funds required for the province's share of hospitalization.

The other point that was made was that the agreement signed some six or seven years ago must stand, notwithstanding the fact that there are changes taking place all the time. One of those changes is the cost of operating hospitals, which has been rising substantially. Will the minister tell us if there have been representations from Saskatchewan recognizing this as a valid way of collecting funds to pay the province's share? Have there been representations from any of the other provinces?

Miss LaMarsh: No, I did discuss with Mr. Stewart, the minister there, on a number of specific items, but not that in particular. I have noticed that the new premier of Saskatchewan has been quoted as talking about a deterrent fee, although no repre-

sentations in any formal way have been made at this point. I should like to say, without any equivocation, that every province will be dealt with on exactly the same footing and on the basis of the agreement. I do not want my hon. friend to suggest that Saskatchewan, under its present leadership, will receive any more favourable treatment than Alberta. It is not a matter of party politics, it is a matter of the philosophy of the act when it came into being, at which time it was adopted by all the provinces. I do not mean in any way to detract from what I characterized as the very vigorous speech by my hon. friend, but he must realize that when we give consideration to a matter it does not mean that just because a province wants to do it the federal government says O.K. go ahead. Surely we must balance all factors and make up our minds. It must necessarily follow when you are dealing with other groups, particularly those which have an honest political philosophical difference, that you will find points on which you simply cannot agree. This happens to be one of them.

Mr. Pascoe: Mr. Chairman, I have a question dealing with hospital construction grants which will require detailed information that the minister may not be able to supply right now, but she might be good enough to provide me with it by letter. The details of this vote show a little over \$2½ million for Saskatchewan. Will it be possible to have a breakdown on where this money went? Further, it shows an item of \$9,666,577 for commitments, but points out that it was not necessary to spend this money. Does this indicate that some hospitals which were approved were not constructed?

Miss LaMarsh: No; with respect to the last question it means they were not finished. I would be very happy to reply to my hon. friend by letter, if that would satisfy him.

Item agreed to.

Welfare services—

40. Administration, operation and maintenance, including grants as detailed in the estimates, \$4,060,300.

Mr. Knowles: Before vote No. 40 carries there are a few repetitious things I would like to say. I hope that does not rule me out of order, but it has been my experience in the house that with some things on which one feels strongly one has to repeat oneself quite often.