

Inquiries of the Ministry

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I have given an answer. I hope my hon. friend will conclude that that answer meets this question or any other similar question, and I do not think there is anything further that I need add. I know my hon. friend's purpose in asking this question. It is not to elicit information: He is seeking to embarrass the government, but without much hope.

Some hon. Members: Oh, oh.

Hon. Robert L. Stanfield (Leader of the Opposition): Mr. Speaker, I too was away from the nation's capital, but I have the impression that the Prime Minister had stated he was going to make a statement on the subject this week. Was I correct in that impression?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): The Prime Minister did make a statement.

Mr. Stanfield: I understood the Prime Minister was going to make a statement on this subject this week in the house. Is this a correct impression or is it not?

Mr. Martin (Essex East): I said, Mr. Speaker, that the Prime Minister made a statement at his press conference on Friday. I know of nothing further that can be added to what he said. The law of the land is clear. The house has passed the medicare legislation.

Mr. Stanfield: Mr. Speaker, some of us had the impression that the Prime Minister had stated he was going to make a statement on this subject in the house this week. Is this or is this not a correct impression?

Mr. Stanley Knowles (Winnipeg North Centre): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question which I should like to direct to the acting Prime Minister. He said that the law of the land is clear. Will he say if the government will leave that law alone?

Mr. E. Nasserden (Rosthern): Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. How many provinces have indicated their intention to go ahead with the medicare program on July 1?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Minister of National Health and Welfare): There is no formal procedure by which provinces officially notify the government at this stage of their intention to enter the medicare plan.

Mr. Nasserden: I have a supplementary question, Mr. Speaker. Could the Minister of
[Mr. Douglas.]

National Health and Welfare indicate whether there has been any change. I believe he reported to the house some time ago that certain provinces—

Mr. Speaker: Order, please. Could the hon. member put his question.

Mr. Nasserden: My question is this: Have any provinces, which previously indicated that they would go ahead with medicare, now indicated that they are not going ahead with it?

Mr. MacEachen: There has been no formal procedure at any stage by which provinces indicate their intention of coming in. My hon. friend realizes that from time to time heads of provincial governments have stated their intention of entering the medicare plan and later have stated an opposite intention.

Hon. Michael Starr (Ontario): I have a supplementary question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. I should like to ask him whether medicare will come into effect on July 1, 1968.

Mr. MacEachen: This question has been answered several times by the Acting Prime Minister.

Mr. Starr: I should like to ask the Minister of National Health and Welfare whether he has any supplementary comment to add to the answer given by the Secretary of State for External Affairs.

Mr. MacEachen: No, Mr. Speaker, the answer was lucid.

[Later:]

Mr. L. M. Brand (Saskatoon): Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Acting Prime Minister related to the question on medicare that was raised earlier. Since the Acting Prime Minister has indicated that the government intends to go ahead with medicare on July 1, does this indicate a change in government policy regarding adherence to the four basic criteria that were laid down in the medicare bill?

Mr. Speaker: Order. I suggest that this is a question of debate and not the type of question that can be asked at this time.

Mr. Brand: Mr. Speaker, may I point out that I am merely asking for information. I am asking whether there is any indication that there has been a change in government policy