important subject, which has been a matter of continuing concern to the department and to the present minister.

The hon. member directs our attention to a practice established in the United States of placing a warning sign on cigarette packages saying that smoking may be a health hazard. He suggests that action be taken in this country to follow this practice in the United States. A great deal must be said for the desirability and the efficacy in reaching the intended objective suggested by the hon. member; however, the authority of the government to do this, and jurisdiction under which this legislative action might be taken, will have to be examined.

I can tell my hon. friend that this very matter has been the subject of discussions with the industry, and that it is presently receiving the attention of the Department of National Health and Welfare. The department will take whatever decision on the point may be appropriate.

• (10:20 p.m.)

VETERANS AFFAIRS—METHOD OF DEALING WITH INQUIRIES BY MEMBERS

Mr. Jack McIntosh (Swift Current-Maple Creek): This afternoon when I addressed my question to the minister I did so for the purpose of clarifying the policy of his department. I have received a letter from one of the pension advocates which is disturbing because it suggests that a procedure is now being followed completely different from the procedure followed in the past. I asked in my question this afternoon if there had been a change in the policy of the Department of Veterans Affairs, a change which the minister had failed to announce in the house.

I wish to be fair to the minister. This does concern only one particular case. However, I assume that if there has been a change in the policy followed, pension advocates are no longer able to answer the letters of members of parliament. If the minister has adopted such a practice he is preventing the efforts of members of parliament to obtain justice for veterans and their dependents, whether from their constituencies or elsewhere in Canada.

I wish to be brief. Did the minister, or someone else in authority, issue instructions to the pension advocates who are supposed to present cases on behalf of the veterans that they are not at any time to answer letters from members of parliament, but that they are to refer those letters to the deputy minister of the department, or to the departmental secretary? If so, what was the reason for issuing such a directive?

Hon. Roger Teillet (Minister of Veterans Affairs): My answer can be very brief. No such directive has been sent. Certainly none has been sent by me. I would like to know what particular case is involved here. I have no knowledge of any case where a pension advocate was told not to answer a letter from a member of parliament. If there is a case, I would like to know about it and if the hon. member would let me have the letter I would look into the matter and reply to him.

I am sorry I could not reply to his question today. I think he understands the situation; the question was ruled out of order. I would have been glad to answer it, though I could have done no more than I have done this evening. I hope this reply will satisfy the hon. member.

Mr. McIntosh: Did the minister instruct anyone in his department to give this directive?

Mr. Teillet: No, Mr. Speaker.

Motion agreed to and the house adjourned at 10.25 p.m.