

HEALTH

PRESERVATION OF CONFIDENTIALITY OF DOCTOR-PATIENT
RELATIONSHIP—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. P. B. Rynard (Simcoe North): Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. It has to do with the growth of socialized medicine requiring identification of the patient and his treatment, information which was inviolate before the advent of state medicine but which can be, and has been used by communist countries against patients. My question is: what protection has been provided to preserve the confidentiality of relations between doctors and patients in Canada?

[Translation]

Hon. Marc Lalonde (Minister of National Health and Welfare): Mr. Speaker, if the hon. member is referring to an area of federal responsibility, I must remind him that as far as the health of civil servants is concerned, quite specific rules compel medical officers to maintain the confidentiality of the medical information they obtain from their patients. In fact, I think the hon. member is concerned about a form which the Ontario Department of Transport is using to request those who are seeking a driver's permit to have their physicians complete a detailed form to be forwarded later to the Ontario Department of Transport. Unfortunately, because this matter is a provincial responsibility, I suggest the hon. member should raise this issue with the Ontario government.

[English]

Mr. Rynard: Is the minister aware that the Ontario Medical Association has asked the provincial ministry of health to stop turning over the names of psychiatric patients to the federal government? I want to ask the minister why that practice is being followed.

[Translation]

Mr. Lalonde: I understand that the statistical data which are computed under medicare are of a quite general character and do not mention the names of the individuals, but again, I should like to inquire and verify the hon. member's assertion.

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[English]

BILINGUALISM

POSSIBILITY OF FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SUGGESTING
AMENDMENTS TO QUEBEC'S BILL NO. 1

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): Mr. Speaker, I want to direct a question to the government House leader supplementary to that directed to the Minister of Manpower and Immigration by my hon. friend from Provencher. It has to do with Quebec Bill No. 1. The Minister of Manpower and Immigration told us there has been no discussion with the Quebec authorities with respect to the exercising of linguistic choice by immigrants to Canada. Is any discussion being undertaken between the government of Canada and the government of Quebec in the light of the statement made by

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culture minister Laurin that amendments might be brought forward to Bill No. 1 in a number of areas—the Francization of business, the precedence of the language law over the charter of human rights as a means of securing compliance with education provisions and so on. The minister told me a week ago that he was not prepared to advise a representative of the government to appear before the Quebec parliamentary commission. My question is this: in the light of the statement by Mr. Laurin and of the obvious reaction to the answer given by the Minister of Manpower and Immigration, does the government intend to take any public initiative with respect to possible amendments or, in the alternative, is the government prepared to make a statement in the House with respect to what amendments might be considered appropriate in the circumstances?

Hon. Allan J. MacEachen (Acting Prime Minister): No, Mr. Speaker. At the present time, as the hon. member has pointed out, the bill is before a committee, or commission, as it is called, of the Quebec National Assembly and residents of Quebec and a variety of organizations are making their views known. It seems to us that this would be a most appropriate way to proceed at this stage and that any intervention before the committee would likely be counterproductive.

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INDIAN AFFAIRS

SAFEGUARDING OF JAMES BAY AGREEMENT GRANTING FREE
CHOICE OF LANGUAGE—GOVERNMENT ACTION

Mr. Walter Baker (Grenville-Carleton): It will not have been lost on the minister that I am not suggesting that that is the only alternative. I have also suggested to him the possibility of making a statement in the House of Commons with respect to what, I hope, are the concerns of the government in connection with Bill No. 1. On another aspect, may I ask whether the question of Inuit language rights has been resolved? On Friday, the Prime Minister said that this matter had, in accordance with his understanding, been settled but I have since learned that this is not the case and that the Inuit people are not satisfied on the ground that they are not specifically excluded so as to comply with the James Bay agreement. Has any initiative been taken by the government with respect to that aspect? Has any legal opinion been obtained with regard to it? Perhaps the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development will deal with the question specifically.

Hon. Warren Allmand (Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development): Mr. Speaker, I met with the President of the Northern Quebec Inuit Association just before lunch. While the Quebec minister has promised to exempt them from Bill No. 1 they have not yet seen the wording of the exemption and they are concerned for this reason. They wish to examine the wording and, if necessary, make some input into it so as to ensure that they are exempted.