

*Oral Questions*

the riding of the hon. member for Northumberland-Miramichi, who unhappily is not here to ask the question which I think he would like to ask were he here and not under medical care.

I cannot see how the minister can stand before us and tell us that the future of a large number of fishermen who have always thought that either they would be compensated for good, they would be bought out, or that they would return to a commercial fishery, should now be left to the vagaries and imagination of the hon. member for Saint John.

**Some hon. Members:** Shame.

**Mr. McGrath:** If the hon. member for Northumberland-Miramichi had been in the House, I would have extended the same invitation to him that I extended to my colleague, the hon. member for Saint John, and obviously he will get that message. But may I say to my hon. friend that it would be our intention to try to re-establish those bona fide fishermen—and I emphasize, bona fide fishermen—who are still receiving compensation. That will be done after consultation.

I might say that the hon. member knows, perhaps better than anyone in the House, that the situation of the fishery in the Atlantic provinces has changed considerably since 1972 when it was a depressed fishery. It is now a very lucrative fishery, with tremendous potential, and there are certain areas where licensing can be extended. We intend to give these people who are receiving compensation and who are still able to fish every opportunity to get back into the fishery.

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**ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS****HAMILTON CIVIC AIRPORT—ENVIRONMENTAL STUDY**

**Mr. Geoff Scott (Hamilton-Wentworth):** Mr. Speaker, my question is for the Minister of the Environment. It has to do with the expansion of Hamilton civil airport. In view of widespread reports that yet another possible impediment to expansion at Mount Hope exists because of a formal federal environmental study, can the minister inform the House whether he has discussed this possibility with the Minister of Transport or whether still another environmental study is needed at all?

**Hon. John A. Fraser (Postmaster General and Minister of the Environment):** The hon. member raises a matter of some importance to the people of Hamilton. A number of studies have been done, as the hon. member knows, with respect to the environmental implications of an expansion of the airport. I am now of the view that there is no need to go into any more formal environmental hearings, and my view is being communicated to the Minister of Transport.

[Mr. LeBlanc.]

**HEALTH****INVESTIGATION INTO ALLEGED EROSION OF MEDICARE PROGRAM—REMEDIAL ACTION**

**Mr. Bob Ogle (Saskatoon East):** Mr. Speaker, I have a question for the Minister of National Health and Welfare. Given the mounting public concern over the erosion of medicare, as evidenced by a recent "Save Medicare" petition signed by almost 300,000 Ontarians, and in view of the Alberta doctors' determination to defend extra billing despite a recent 15 per cent fee hike, and considering that Tory governments such as in New Brunswick are slashing their health care budgets while apparently diverting a portion of their federal health grants to other uses, can the minister please inform the House whether his department—not the Hall review—is investigating the serious threats confronting our national medicare system and, if it is, why can immediate remedial action not be taken?

**Hon. David Crombie (Minister of National Health and Welfare):** May I indicate to the hon. member, and indeed to others who are concerned with the question, that the Hall review which I requested in September will deal with the whole of the matter. Indeed, as I indicated in the House at that time, it is very important that all aspects of the principles of medicare, in terms of the guidelines which are required—making sure that those principles are not eroded—are dealt with properly. That is why I asked Mr. Justice Hall to take on that responsibility. That is a good way to go now. That report will be available in April, all members will be interested in its recommendations, and I will make my recommendations at that time.

**Mr. Ogle:** Mr. Speaker, I have a supplementary question. I appreciate what the minister has said. Nevertheless, I believe that since, in some instances—such as this particular one—economic studies have proven conclusively that user charges such as the \$10 per visit in out-patient fees in New Brunswick restrict—

**Mr. Speaker:** Order, please. If the hon. member has a supplementary question, will he get to it.

**Mr. Ogle:** I should like to ask the minister if he has done anything in particular about the \$10 per visit out-patient fee in New Brunswick.

**Mr. Crombie:** All studies which pertain to the Medical Care Act of 1968 or the HIDS Act of 1958, all studies in a number of provinces have been referred to Mr. Justice Hall. There will shortly be one out, for example, in the province of Ontario about opting out in Ontario, which I think will have some quite wise things to say. The fact of the matter is that a number of provinces are dealing with their problems in their own particular way. They are carrying out studies, and Mr. Justice Hall will receive their reports.

I recognize that it is the wish of some hon. members that things be done immediately. Let me say that I am firmly convinced that the medicare program is the most popular