

*Inquiries of the Ministry***CONSUMER AFFAIRS****INCREASE IN FEES BY ONTARIO MEDICAL ASSOCIATION**

ence until he was pretty sure who would attend. Therefore he is, by the announcement he made yesterday, probing the situation to see whether all the countries would be prepared to come. One of the principal problems, with which I am sure the Leader of the Opposition is familiar, is that the Soviet Union two days ago said that it was not in favour of holding a Geneva-type conference. I am sure he would agree that if the Soviet Union did not come there would be a very great gap in the proceedings.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Could I ask the minister whether the Secretary General has communicated with him or any representative of the Canadian government regarding the desirability of calling such a conference, and whether the Canadian government has intimated to the Secretary General Canada's willingness not only to participate but to promote such a conference?

Mr. Sharp: As the House will recall, even before the Secretary General had talked about taking any initiative himself I had said in the House that our ambassador to the United Nations was meeting with the Secretary General to discuss an idea that we had, namely, that even if a conference could not be held it might be useful for him to send a representative. We are still discussing this proposal with him, but I want to assure the hon. gentleman that, to some extent, we have anticipated events by taking up the issue with the Secretary General and, of course, have indicated to him that we would be happy to attend such a conference if we were invited.

Mr. Stanfield: Since the Prime Minister of Great Britain has also, on behalf of the British government, stressed the importance of such a conference, has the Secretary of State for External Affairs or his department been in touch with the government of Great Britain to discuss what the British Prime Minister may have in mind and what the two countries might do in collaboration?

Mr. Sharp: Since Canada and the United Kingdom are quite agreed upon the desirability of a conference, we have not been concentrating on that problem. The really serious problem facing the world is the possibility that some countries might not wish to attend. For example, we are exploring with the government of the Soviet Union whether their intentions remain the same as they indicated a couple of days ago or whether they would be prepared to reconsider their position.

Mr. T. C. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): Mr. Speaker, may I direct a question to the Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs regarding the decision of the Ontario Medical Association to increase their fees by an amount which averages out at 4½ per cent. In view of the fact that medical fees were raised 10 per cent in April, 1969, I want to ask the minister whether this action was taken unilaterally, or was it the result of any discussions with the Prices and Incomes Commission? Further, did the minister or his department have any discussions with the medical profession regarding this increase in fees?

Hon. Ron Basford (Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs): The Canadian Medical Association made a statement some time ago urging the provincial bodies not to increase their fees in 1970. During the course of the national conference on price stability and at the subsequent federal-provincial conference there was substantial agreement among governments that the provincial governments would do all in their power not to allow an increase in medical fees in 1970. Therefore any increase made in Ontario is not made with the approval of the federal government or of the Prices and Incomes Commission. I expect that the Prices and Incomes Commission will be dealing with the government of the province of Ontario in an effort to see that no such increases are made.

Mr. Douglas (Nanaimo-Cowichan-The Islands): In view of the fact that this decision was taken unilaterally, and in view of the fact that it appears to be in violation of clause (g) of the agreement which was reached at the conference on price stability, may I ask the minister what action the government intends to take in order to prevent this increase going into effect or at least to hold it in abeyance until discussions can be held with the medical profession in Ontario?

Mr. Basford: Mr. Speaker, I think that such action, as the hon. member knows, is purely within the jurisdiction of the province of Ontario, and as I said a moment ago the Prices and Incomes Commission will expect to have discussions with the province of Ontario in an effort to see that these increases are not made. One would have thought that one would have received from the doctors of